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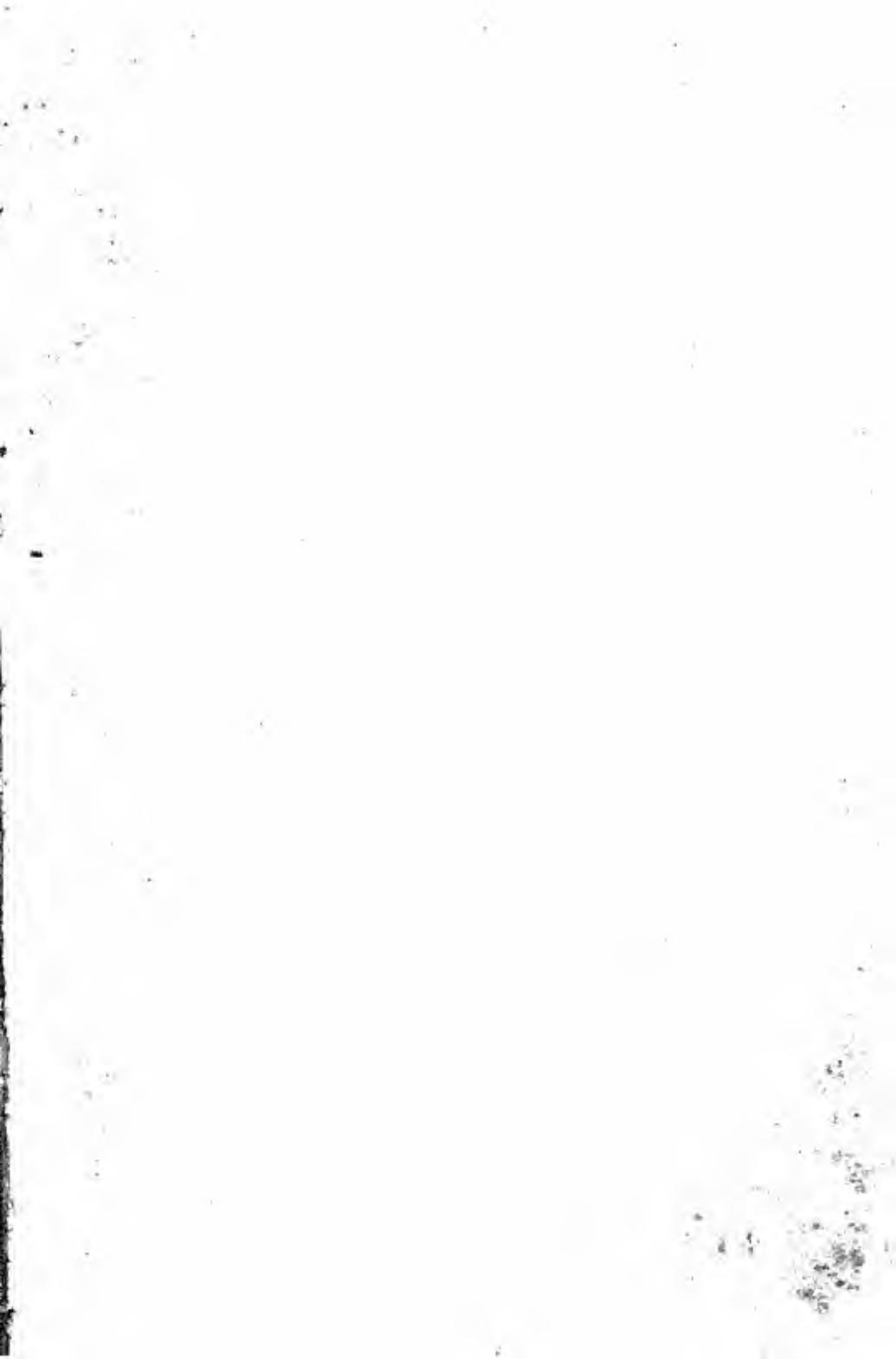
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ORIENTAL SPLENDOUR





ORIENTAL SPLENDOUR

An Anthology of Eastern Tales

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY HERBERT VAN THAL

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INTRODUCTION

Is it because Macaulay once wrote that he had never met any student of eastern languages who could convince him that the whole of Oriental literature was worth a single shelf of the Classics of Europe—that the great literature of the Orient is still so little known to the majority of English readers? The answer is much more likely to be that the English reader has such a wide and probably chaotic choice of reading matter that beyond *The Arabian Nights* little eastern literature has come his way to fire his imagination, yet from the East we have poetry of exquisite beauty and a race of philosophers whose learning the West could not but acknowledge as supreme. Fortunately there have been many Englishmen who have devoted their lives to the study of Oriental literature and have become acknowledged masters of their subject—Burton, Sale, Browne, Giles, Mitford, Dickens, Petrie, Waley, to name but a few to whom we are grateful for their work in this field. Most of the literature that remains indigenous was written many centuries ago, that is before the West had exercised any influence on the great eastern civilisations. It makes these legends, fables, stories, and poems so valuable now that western ideologies have swept over the whole world, and modernised it with political shibboleths which have wiped out the core of individuality that was peculiar to each language and civilisation.

Strangely enough, save for Mr. John Rodker's *Eastern Love*¹ and W. A. Clouston's *Eastern Romance*,² there have been few anthologies of Oriental stories. So while some readers may be aware of the quality of Arabian and Persian tales, others may have only led them to appreciate the literature of China and Japan. There are certain common denominators in all literatures, but from the Orient in particular one can expect the interlacing of supernatural and human elements which abound in so many of the stories written by Hindus, Buddhists, or Muslims, or Taoists, while parallels to almost all tales exist in

¹ Limited Edition, 1927.

² Privately printed, 1889.

countries the most remote and the most dissimilar in regard to religion, manners and customs.

In collecting the stories from so many countries within one volume, there were problems not only of representation and story proper, but of date limitation. In all these respects I have been solely governed in principal by the attractiveness and intrinsic value of the tale, as well as giving attention to variety and that of its indigenous quality. In the short introductory notes to the tales themselves it has not been possible to discuss the origins of the actual type of story, their analogies, or their partial or accidental resemblances, for this book does not seek to illustrate examples of comparative folklore. Nor is every Oriental literature represented—that would have made too bulky a production. Despite these days of overcrowded book production one can truthfully say there is still a mine of material from the East that demands translating and retranslating, especially now that moral considerations are no longer a stumbling block.

H. v. T.

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I HAVE to thank for advice : Professor Arthur Waley ; Professor Stephen Glanville ; Professor A. J. Arberry ; Professor Reuben Levy ; Mr. Edmund Blunden ; Miss S. M. Shrinagesh ; Mr. Macaleavy of the British Museum and Mr. Robinson of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Permission to reprint *The Story of 'Arab-Zandiq* was kindly given me by Professor Bernard Lewis and the Harvill Press ; *The Five Tales from the Panchatantra* by Mr. Basil Blackwell ; *The Merchant's Daughter* from the Tales of Fez by Mr. John Rodker ; *The Courtesan* by Messrs. T. Werner Laurie ; and *The Hojoki* by Professor Sadler and Messrs. Angus and Robertson. Mr. Robin King has translated *The Story of the Man with a Knife*.

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H. v. T.

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Translated from the German of Adolf Bastian by William Goonetilleke.



"There are men who cannot read Pickwick, so they were not wanting who spoke of 'Dreams of the distempered fancy of the East.'"—Sir Richard Burton.

"A collection of good sentences resembles a string of pearls."—Chinese Proverb.

"In making a candle, we seek for light, in studying a book, we seek for reason; light, to illuminate a dark chamber; reason to enlighten man's heart."—Chinese Proverb.

"You might search the writings of Aristotle and Augustine, of Galen and the Arabians; in none of them could you find any hint of what we now call the subconscious mind. For our ancestors there was only the soul a conscious self, on the one hand, and on the other God, the saints, and a host of good and evil spirits."—Aldous Huxley, *The Devils of Loudun*.



ARABIA

FROM Arabia, two tales from *The Thousand Nights*. Not all the tales from the great collection are pure Arabic, nor were the stories written at the same time nor in the same place. Some obviously emanated from Persia, others from India. Moreover anyone who has read Burton's translation of the Nights and his supplementary volumes will be only too aware of the differences in style and thought. But as has been remarked in the Introduction to this book, many collections of Oriental stories are conveniently linked together by a *raconteur's* tale as a means to embrace the collection.

Guidance of choice in this case has been mainly length—though the reader should find "The Sleeper and the Waker" an excellent tale, and "The Tailor, the Lady and the Captain" a saucy make-weight. The tales themselves are best summed up in Burton's own words: "Viewed as a *tout ensemble* in full and complete form, they are a drama of Eastern life, and a Dance of Death made sublime by faith and the highest emotions, by the certainty of expiation and the fulness of atoning equity, where virtue is victorious, vice is vanquished, and the ways of Allah are justified to man. They are a panorama which remains Ken-speckle upon the mental retina. They form a phantasmagoria in which archangels and angels, devils and goblins, men of air, of fire, of water, naturally mingle with men of earth; where flying horses and talking fishes are utterly realistic; where King and Prince meet fisherman and pauper, larma and cannibal; where citizen jostles Badawi, eunuch meets Knight; the Kazi hobnobs with the thief; the pure and pious sit down to the same tray with the bawd and the pimp; where the professional religionist, the learned Koranist and the strictest moralist consort with the wicked magician, the scoffer and the debauchée-poet like Abu Nowas; where the courtier jests with the boor, and where the sweep is bedded with the noble lady."¹

¹ Burton : *Terminal Essay*, p. 157.





THE SLEEPER AND THE WAKER¹

It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that there was once at Baghdad, in the Caliphate of Harun al-Rashid, a man and a merchant, who had a son Abú al-Hasan-al-Khalf'a by name.² The merchant died leaving great store of wealth to his heir who divided it into two equal parts, whereof he laid up one and spent

¹ Arab. "Al-Náim wa al-Yakzán." This excellent story is not in the Mac. or Bresl. Edits.; but is given in the Breslau Text, iv. 184-189 (Nights cclxxii.-cxcii.). It is familiar to readers of the old "Arabian Nights Entertainments" as "Abou-Hassan or the Sleeper Awakened"; and as yet it is the only one of the eleven added by Galland whose original has been discovered in Arabic: the learned Frenchman, however, supplied it with embellishments *more suo*, and seems to have taken it from an original fuller than our text, as is shown by sundry poetical and other passages which he apparently did not invent. Lane (vol. ii. chap. 12), noting that its chief and best portion is an historical anecdote related as a fact, is inclined to think that it is not a genuine tale of The Nights. He finds it in Al-Isháki who finished his history about the close of Sultan Mustáfá the Osmanli's reign, circa A.H. 1032 (=1623) and he avails himself of this version as it is "narrated in a simple and agreeable manner." Mr. Payne remarks: "The above title (Asleep and Awake) is of course intended to mark the contrast between the everyday (or waking) hours of Aboulhussn and his fantastic life in the Khalif's palace, supposed by him to have passed in a dream"; I may add that amongst frolicsome Eastern despots the adventure might often have happened and that it might have given a hint to Cervantes.

² i.e. The Wag. See vol. i. 311: the old version calls him "the Debauchée."

of the other half ; and he fell to companying with Persians ³ and with the sons of the merchants and he gave himself up to good drinking and good eating, till all the wealth ⁴ he had with him was wasted and wantoned ; whereupon he betook himself to his friends and comrades and cup-companions and expounded to them his case, discovering to them the failure of that which was in his hand of wealth. But not one of them took heed of him or even deigned answer him. So he returned to his mother (and indeed his spirit was broken) and related to her that which had happened to him and what had befallen him from his friends, how they had neither shared with him nor requited him with speech. Quoth she, " O Abu al-Hasan, on this wise are the sons ⁵ of this time : an thou have aught, they draw thee near to them, ⁶ and if thou have naught, they put thee away from them." And she went on to condole with him, what while he bewailed himself and his tears flowed and he repeated these lines :—

An wane my wealth, no man will succour me, * When my wealth waxeth
all men friendly show :
How many a friend, for wealth showed friendliness * Who, when my
wealth departed, turned to foe !

Then he sprang up and going to the place wherein was the other half of his good, took it and lived with it well ; and he sware that he would never again consort with a single one of those he had known, but would company only with the stranger nor entertain even him but one night and that, when it morrowed, he would never know him more. Accordingly he fell to sitting every eventide on the bridge over Tigris and looking at each one who passed by him ; and if he saw him to be a stranger, he made friends with him and carried him to his house, where he conversed and caroused with him all night till morning. Then he dismissed him and would never more salute him with the Salam nor ever more drew near unto him, neither invited him again. Thus he continued to do for the space of a full year, till, one day, while he sat on the bridge, as was his wont, expecting who should come to him so he might take him and

³ Arab. " Al-Fârs " ; a people famed for cleverness and debauchery. I cannot see why Lane omitted the Persians, unless he had Persian friends at Cairo.

⁴ i.e. the half he intended for spending-money.

⁵ i.e. " men," a characteristic Arab idiom : here it applies to the sons of all time.

⁶ i.e. make much of thee.

pass the night with him, behold, up came the Caliph and Masrur, the Swoorder of his vengeance⁷ disguised in merchants' dress, according to their custom. So Abu al-Hasan looked at them and rising, because he knew them not, asked them, "What say ye? Will ye go with me to my dwelling-place, so ye may eat what is ready and drink what is at hand, to wit, platter-bread⁸ and meat cooked and wine strained?" The Caliph refused this, but he conjured him and said to him, "Allah upon thee, O my lord, go with me, for thou art my guest this night, and baulk not my hopes of thee!" And he ceased not to press him till he consented; wherat Abu al-Hasan rejoiced and walking on before him, gave not over talking with him till they came to his house and he carried the Caliph into the saloon. Al-Rashid entered a hall such as an thou sawest it and gazedst upon its walls, thou hadst beheld marvels; and hadst thou looked narrowly at its water-conduits thou wouldest have seen a fountain cased with gold. The Caliph made his man abide at the door; and, as soon as he was seated, the host brought him somewhat to eat; so he ate, and Abu al-Hasan ate with him that eating might be grateful to him. Then he removed the tray and they washed their hands and the Commander of the Faithful sat down again; whereupon Abu al-Hasan set on the drinking vessels, and seating himself by his side, fell to filling and giving him to drink⁹ and entertaining him with discourse. And when they had drunk their sufficiency the host called for a slave-girl like a branch of Bán who took a lute and sang to it these two couplets:—

O thou aye dwelling in my heart, * Whileas thy form is far from sight,
Thou art my sprite by me unseen, * Yet nearest near art thou, my sprite.

His hospitality pleased the Caliph and the goodliness of his manners, and he said to him, "O youth, who art thou? Make me acquainted with thyself, so I may requite thee thy kindness." But Abu al-Hasan smiled and said, "O my lord, far be it, alas! that what is past should again come to pass and that I company with thee at other time than this time!" The Prince

⁷ In Lanc the Caliph is accompanied by "certain of his domestics."

⁸ Arab. "Khubz Mutabbak,"—bread baked in a platter, instead of in an oven, an earthen jar previously heated, to the sides of which the scones or bannocks of dough are applied: "it is lighter than oven-bread, especially if it be made thin and leavened." See Al-Shakúrī, a medical writer quoted by Dozy.

⁹ In other parts of The Nights Harun al-Rashid declines wine-drinking.

of True Believers asked, "Why so? and why wilt thou not acquaint me with thy case?" and Abu al-Hasan answered, "Know, O my lord, that my story is strange and that there is a cause for this affair." Quoth Al-Rashid, "And what is the cause?" and quoth he, "The cause hath a tail." The Caliph¹⁰ laughed at his words and Abu al-Hasan said, "I will explain to thee this saying by the tale of the Larrikin and the Cook. So hear thou, O my lord, the

STORY OF THE LARRIKIN¹¹ AND THE COOK."

One of the ne'er-do-wells found himself one fine morning without aught and the world was straitened upon him and patience failed him; so he lay down to sleep and ceased not slumbering till the sun stang him and the foam came out upon his mouth, whereupon he arose, and he was penniless and had not even so much as a single dirham. Presently he arrived at the shop of a Cook, who had set his pots and pans over the fire and washed his saucers and wiped his scales and swept his shop and sprinkled it; and indeed his fats and oils were clear and clarified and his spices fragrant and he himself stood behind his cooking-pots ready to serve customers. So the Larrikin, whose wits had been sharpened by hunger, went in to him and saluting him, said to him, "Weigh me half a dirham's worth of meat and a quarter of a dirham's worth of boiled grain¹² and the like of bread." So the Kitchener

¹⁰ The 'Allámah (doctissimus) Sayce (p. 212, Comparative Philology, London, Trübner, 1885) goes far back for Khalifah=a deputy, a successor. He begins with the Semitic (Hebrew?) root "Khaliph"=to change, exchange: hence "Khaleph"=agio. From this the Greeks got their *κόλλυβος* and Cicero his "Collybus," a money-lender.

¹¹ Arab. "Harfúsh," (in Bresl. Edit. iv. 138, "Kharfúsh"), in popular parlance a "blackguard." I have to thank Mr. Alexander J. Cotheal, of New York, for sending me a MS. copy of this tale.

¹² Arab. "Ta'ám," in Egypt and Somaliland=millet seed (*Holcus Sorghum*) cooked in various ways. In Barbary it is applied to the local staff of life, Kuskusú, wheaten or other flour damped and granulated by hand to the size of peppercorns, and lastly steamed (as we steam potatoes), the cullender-pot being placed over a long-necked jar full of boiling water. It is served with clarified butter, shredded onions and meat; and it represents the Risotto of Northern Italy. Europeans generally find it too greasy for digestion. This Barbary staff of life is of old date and is thus mentioned by Leo Africanus in early sixth century. "It is made of a lump of Dow, first set upon the fire, in a vessel full of holes and afterwards tempered with Butter and Pottage." So says good Master John Pory, "A Geographical Historie of Africa, by John Leo, a Moor," London 1600, impensis George Bishop.

weighed it out to him and the good-for-naught entered the shop, whereupon the man set the food before him and he ate till he had gobbled up the whole and licked the saucers and sat perplexed, knowing not how he should do with the Cook concerning the price of that he had eaten, and turning his eyes about upon everything in the shop ; and as he looked, behold, he caught sight of an earthen pan lying arsy-versy upon its mouth ; so he raised it from the ground and found under it a horse's tail, freshly cut off and the blood oozing from it ; whereby he knew that the Cook adulterated his meat with horseflesh. When he discovered this default, he rejoiced therein and washing his hands, bowed his head and went out ; and when the Kitchener saw that he went and gave him naught, he cried out, saying, "Stay, O pest, O burglar !" So the Larrikin stopped and said to him, "Dost thou cry out upon me and call to me with these words, O cornute ?" Whereat the Cook was angry and coming down from the shop, cried, "What meanest thou by thy speech, O low fellow, thou that devourest meat and millet and bread and kitchen and goest forth with 'the Peace¹³ be on thee !' as it were the thing had not been, and payest down naught for it ?" Quoth the Lack-penny, "Thou liest, O accursed son of a cuckold !" Whereupon the Cook cried out and laying hold of his debtor's collar, said, "O Moslems, this fellow is my first customer¹⁴ this day and he hath eaten my food and given me naught." So the folk gathered about them and blamed the Ne'er-do-well and said to him, "Give him the price of that which thou hast eaten." Quoth he, "I gave him a dirham before I entered the shop" ; and quoth the Cook, "Be everything I sell this day forbidden to me, if he gave me so much as the name of a coin ! By Allah, he gave me naught, but ate my food and went out and would have made off, without aught said." Answered the Larrikin, "I gave thee a dirham," and he reviled the Kitchener, who returned his abuse ; whereupon he dealt him a buffet and they gripped and grappled and throttled each other. When the folk saw them fighting, they came up to them and asked them, "What is this strife between you, and no cause for it ?" and the Lackpenny answered, "Ay, by Allah, but there is a cause for it, and the cause hath

¹³ Arab. "Bi al-Salám" (pron. "Bissalám") = in the Peace (of Allah).

¹⁴ And would bring him bad luck if allowed to go without paying.

a tail!" Whereupon, cried the Cook, "Yea, by Allah, now thou mindest me of thyself and thy dirham! Yes, he gave me a dirham and but a quarter of the coin is spent. Come back and take the rest of the price of thy dirham." For he understood what was to do, at the mention of the tail; "and I, O my brother" (added Abu al-Hasan), "my story hath a cause, which I will tell thee." The Caliph laughed at his speech and said, "By Allah, this is none other than a pleasant tale! Tell me thy story and the cause." Replied the host, "With love and goodly gree! Know, O my lord, that my name is Abu al-Hasan al-Khalf'a and that my father died and left me abundant wealth, of which I made two parts. One I laid up and with the other I betook myself to enjoying the pleasures of friendship and conviviality and consorting with intimates and boon-companions and with the sons of the merchants, nor did I leave one but I caroused with him and he with me, and I lavished all my money on comrades and good cheer, till there remained with me naught;¹⁵ whereupon I betook myself to the friends and fellow-topers upon whom I had wasted my wealth, so perhaps they might provide for my case; but, when I visited them and went round about to them all, I found no vantage in one of them, nor would any so much as break a bittock of bread in my face. So I wept for myself and repairing to my mother, complained to her of my case. Quoth she:—Such are friends; an thou have aught, they frequent thee and devour thee, but, an thou have naught, they cast thee off and chase thee away. Then I brought out the other half of my money and bound myself by an oath that I would never more entertain any save one single night, after which I would never again salute him nor notice him; hence my saying to thee:—Far be it, alas! that what is past should again come to pass, for I will never again company with thee after this night." When the Commander of the Faithful heard this, he laughed a loud laugh and said, "By Allah, O my brother, thou art indeed excused in this matter, now that I know the cause and that the cause hath a tail. Nevertheless, Inshallah, I will not sever myself from thee." Replied Abu al-Hasan, "O my guest, did I not say to thee, Far be it, alas! that what is past should again come to pass? For indeed I will never again foregather with any!" Then the Caliph rose and the host set before him a dish of roast goose and a bannock

¹⁵ i.e. of the first half, as has been shown.

of first-bread¹⁶ and sitting down, fell to cutting off morsels and morselling the Caliph therewith. They gave not over eating till they were filled, when Abu al-Hasan brought basin and ewer and potash and they washed their hands. Then he lighted three wax-candles and three lamps, and spreading the drinking-cloth, brought strained wine, clear, old and fragrant, whose scent was as that of virgin musk. He filled the first cup and saying, "O my boon-companion, be ceremony laid aside between us by thy leave! Thy slave is by thee; may I not be afflicted with thy loss!" drank it off and filled a second cup, which he handed to the Caliph with due reverence. His fashion pleased the Commander of the Faithful, and the goodliness of his speech, and he said to himself, "By Allah, I will assuredly requite him for this!" Then Abu al-Hasan filled the cup again and handed it to the Caliph, reciting these two couplets:

Had we thy coming known, we would for sacrifice * Have poured thee
out heart's blood or blackness of the eyes;
Ay, and we would have spread our bosoms in thy way, * That so thy
feet might fare on eyelids, carpet-wise.

When the Caliph heard his verses, he took the cup from his hand and kissed it and drank it off and returned it to Abu al-Hasan, who make him an obeisance and filled and drank. Then he filled again and kissing the cup thrice, recited these lines:—

Your presence honoureth the base, * And we confess the deed of grace;
An you absent yourself from us, * No freke we find to fill your place.

Then he gave the cup to the Caliph, saying, "Drink it in health and soundness! It doeth away malady and bringeth remedy and setteth the runnels of health to flow free." So they ceased not carousing and conversing till middle-night, when the Caliph said to his host, "O my brother, hast thou in thy heart a concupiscence thou wouldst have accomplished or a contingency thou wouldst avert?" Said he, "By Allah, there is no regret in my heart save that I am not empowered with bidding and forbidding, so I might manage what is in my mind!" Quoth the Commander of the Faithful, "By Allah, and again by Allah,¹⁷ O my brother, tell me what is in thy mind!" And

¹⁶ Arab. "Kumájah" from the Persian Kumásh = bread unleavened and baked in ashes. Egyptians use the word for hannocks of fine flour.

¹⁷ Arab. "Yá 'llah, yá 'llah"; vulg. used for "Look sharp!" e.g. "Yá 'llah jári, yá walad" = "Be off at once, boy."

quoth Abu al-Hasan, "Would Heaven I might be Caliph for one day and avenge myself on my neighbours, for that in my vicinity is a mosque and therein four shaykhs, who hold it a grievance when there cometh a guest to me, and they trouble me with talk and worry me in words and menace me that they will complain of me to the Prince of True Believers, and indeed they oppress me exceedingly, and I crave of Allah the Most High power for one day, that I may beat each and every of them with four hundred lashes, as well as the Imám of the mosque, and parade them round about the city of Baghdad and bid cry before them:—This is the reward and the least of the reward of whoso exceedeth in talk and vexeth the folk and turneth their joy to annoy. This is what I wish, and no more." Said the Caliph, "Allah grant thee that thou seekest! Let us crack one last cup and rise ere the dawn draw near, and to-morrow night I will be with thee again." Said Abu al-Hasan, "Far be it!" Then the Caliph crowned a cup, and putting therein a piece of Cretan Bhang, gave it to his host and said to him, "My life on thee, O my brother, drink this cup from my hand!" and Abu al-Hasan answered, "Ay, by thy life, I will drink it from thy hand." So he took it and drank it off; but hardly had it settled in his stomach, when his head forewent his heels and he fell to the ground like one slain; whereupon the Caliph went out and said to his slave Masrur, "Go in to yonder young man, the house master, and take him up and bring him to me at the palace; and when thou goest out, shut the door." So saying, he went away, whilst Masrur entered, and taking up Abu al-Hasan, shut the door behind him, and made after his master, till he reached with him the palace what while the night drew to an end and the cocks began crowing,¹⁸ and set him down before the Commander of the Faithful, who laughed at him. Then he sent for Ja'afar the Barmecide and when he came before him, said to him, "Note thou yonder young man" (pointing to Abu al-Hasan), "and when thou shalt see him to-morrow seated in my place of estate and on the throne¹⁹ of my Caliphate and clad in my royal clothing, stand

¹⁸ A natural clock, called by West Africans Cokkerapeek=Cock-speak. All the world over it is the subject of superstition: see Giles's *Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio* (1. 177), where Miss Li, who is a devil, hears the cock crow and vanishes.

¹⁹ Arab. "Kursi," Assyrian "Kussú"=throne; and "Korsái" in Aramaic (or Nabathean as Al-Mas'udi calls it), the second growth-period of the "Semitic" family, which supplanted Assyrian and Babylonian, and became, as Arabic now is, the common speech of the "Semitic" world.

thou in attendance upon him and enjoin the Emirs and Grandees and the folk of my household and the officers of my realm to be upon their feet, as in his service and obey him in whatso he shall bid them do ; and thou, if he speak to thee of aught, do it and hearken unto his say and gainsay him not in anything during this coming day." Ja'afar acknowledged the order with "Hearkening and obedience" and withdrew, whilst the Prince of True Believers went in to the palace women, who came up to him, and he said to them, "When this sleeper shall awake to-morrow, kiss ye the ground between his hands, and do ye wait upon him and gather round about him and clothe him in the royal clothing and serve him with the service of the Caliphate and deny not aught of his estate, but say to him, Thou art the Caliph." Then he taught them what they should say to him and how they should do with him, and withdrawing to a retired room, let down a curtain before himself and slept. Thus fared it with the Caliph ; but as regards Abu al-Hasan, he gave not over snoring in his sleep till the day brake clear, and the rising of the sun drew near, when a woman in waiting came up to him and said to him, "O our lord, the morning prayer !" Hearing these words he laughed and opening his eyes, turned them about the palace and found himself in an apartment whose walls were painted with gold and lapis lazuli and its ceiling dotted and starred with red gold. Around it were sleeping chambers, with curtains of gold-embroidered silk let down over their doors, and all about vessels of gold and porcelain and crystal and furniture and carpets disspread and lamps burning before the niche wherein men prayed, and slave-girls and eunuchs and Mamelukes and black slaves and boys and pages and attendants. When he saw this he was bewildered in his wit and said, "By Allah, either I am dreaming a dream, or this is Paradise and the Abode of Peace ! " ²⁰ And he shut his eyes and would have slept again. Quoth one of the eunuchs, "O my lord, this is not of thy wont, O Commander of the Faithful !" Then the rest of the handmaids of the palace came up to him and lifted him into a sitting posture, when he found himself upon a mattress, raised a cubit's height from the ground and all stuffed with floss silk. So they seated him upon it and propped his elbow with a pillow, and he looked

²⁰ Arab. "Dar al-Salam," one of the seven "Gardens" into which the Mohammedian Paradise is divided. Man's fabled happiness began in a Garden (Eden) and the suggestion came naturally that it would continue there.

at the apartment and its vastness and saw those eunuchs and slave-girls in attendance upon him and standing about his head, whereupon he laughed at himself and said, "By Allah, 'tis not as I were on wake, yet I am not asleep!" And in his perplexity he bowed his chin upon his bosom and then opened his eyes, little by little, smiling and saying, "What is this state wherein I find myself?" Then he arose and sat up, whilst the damsels laughed at him privily; and he was bewildered in his wit, and bit his finger; and as the bite pained him, he cried "Oh!" and was vexed; and the Caliph watched him, whence he saw him not, and laughed. Presently Abu al-Hasan turned to a damsel and called to her; whereupon she answered, "At thy service, O Prince of True Believers!" Quoth he, "What is thy name?" and quoth she, "Shajarat al-Durr."²¹ Then he said to her, "By the protection of Allah, O damsel, am I Commander of the Faithful?" She replied, "Yes, indeed, by the protection of Allah thou in this time art Commander of the Faithful." Quoth he, "By Allah, thou liest, O thousandfold whore!"²² Then he glanced at the Chief Eunuch and called to him, whereupon he came to him and kissing the ground before him, said, "Yes, O Commander of the Faithful." Asked Abu al-Hasan, "Who is Commander of the Faithful?" and the eunuch answered "Thou." And Abu al-Hasan said, "Thou liest, thousandfold he-whore that thou art!" Then he turned to another eunuch and said to him, "O my chief,²³ by the protection of Allah, am I Prince of the True Believers?" Said he, "Ay, by Allah, O my lord, thou art in this time Commander of the Faithful and Viceregent of the Lord of the three Worlds." Abu Al-Hasan laughed at himself and doubted of his reason and was bewildered at what he beheld, and said, "In one night do I become Caliph? Yesterday I was Abu al-Hasan the Wag, and to-day I am Commander of the Faithful." Then the Chief Eunuch came up to him and said, "O Prince of True Believers (the name of Allah encompass thee!) thou art indeed Commander of the Faithful and Viceregent of the Lord of the three Worlds!" And the slave-girls and eunuchs flocked round about him, till he arose and abode wondering at his case. Hereupon the

²¹ Branch of Pearl.

²² Arab. "Kahbah," the lowest word, effectively used in contrast with the speaker's surroundings.

²³ Arab. "Yā kabīrī," = *mon brave, my good man.*

eunuch brought him a pair of sandals wrought with raw silk and green silk and purfled with red gold, and he took them and after examining them set them in his sleeve; whereat the Castrato cried out and said, "Allah! Allah! O my lord, these are sandals for the treading of thy feet, so thou mayst wend to the wardrobe." Abu al-Hasan was confounded, and shaking the sandals from his sleeve, put them on his feet, whilst the Caliph died of laughter at him. The slave forewent him to the chapel of ease, where he entered and doing his job,²⁴ came out into the chamber, whereupon the slave-girls brought him a basin of gold and an ewer of silver and poured water on his hands and he made the Wuzú-ablution. Then they spread him a prayer-carpet and he prayed. Now he knew not how to pray²⁵ and gave not over bowing and prostrating for twenty inclinations,²⁶ pondering in himself the while and saying, "By Allah, I am none other than the Commander of the Faithful in very truth! This is assuredly no dream, for all these things happen not in a dream." And he was convinced and determined in himself that he was Prince of True Believers; so he pronounced the Salám²⁷ and finished his prayers; whereupon the Mamelukes and slave-girls came round about him with bundled suits of silken and linen stuffs and clad him in the costume of the Caliphate and gave the royal dagger in his hand. Then the Chief Eunuch came in and said, "O Prince of True Believers, the Chamberlain is at the door craving permission to enter." Said he, "Let him enter!" whereupon he came in and after kissing ground offered the salutation, "Peace be upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful!" At this Abu al-Hasan rose and descended from the couch to the floor; whereupon the official exclaimed, "Allah! Allah! O Prince of True Believers, wottest thou not that all men are thy lieges and under thy rule and that it is not meet for the Caliph to rise to any man?" Presently the eunuch went out before him and the little white slaves

²⁴ Like an Eastern he goes to the water-closet the first thing in the morning, or rather dawn, and then washes ceremonially before saying the first prayer. In Europe he would probably wait till after breakfast.

²⁵ i.e. He was so confused that he forgot. All Moslems know how to pray, whether they pray or not.

²⁶ The dawn-prayer consists of only four inclinations (*raka'at*); two "Farz" (divinely appointed), and two Sunnah (the custom of the Apostle). For the Raka'ah see Lane, M.E. chap. iii.; it cannot be explained without illustrations.

²⁷ After both sets of prayers, Farz and Sunnah, the Moslem looks over his right shoulder and says "The Peace (of Allah) be upon you and the ruth of Allah," and repeats the words over the left shoulder. The salutation is addressed to the Guardian Angels or to the bystanders (Moslems) who, however, do not return it.

behind him, and they ceased not going till they raised the curtain and brought him into the hall of judgment and the throne-room of the Caliphate. There he saw the curtains and the forty doors and Al-'Ijli and Al-Rakáshí the poet, and 'Ibdán and Jadím and Abu Ishák²⁸ the cup-companion and beheld swords drawn and the lions²⁹ compassing the throne as the white of the eye encircleth the black, and gilded glaives and death-dealing bows and Ajams and Arabs and Turks and Daylamites and folk and peoples and Emirs and Wazirs and Captains and Grandees and Lords of the land and men of war in band, and in very sooth there appeared the might of the house of Abbas³⁰ and the majesty of the Prophet's family. So he sat down upon the throne of the Caliphate and set the dagger³¹ on his lap, whereupon all present came up to kiss ground between his hands and called down on him length of life and continuance of weal. Then came forward Ja'afar the Barmecide and kissing the ground, said, "Be the wide world of Allah the treading of thy feet and may Paradise be thy dwelling-place and the Fire the home of thy foes ! Never may neighbour defy thee nor the lights of fire die out for thee,³² O Caliph of all cities and ruler of all countries ! " Therewithal Abu al-Hasan cried out to him and said, "O dog of the sons of Barmak, go down forthright, thou and the chief of the city police, to such a place in such a street and deliver an hundred dinars of gold to the mother of Abu al-Hasan the Wag and bear her my salutation. Then, go to such a mosque and take the four Shaykhs and the Imám and scourge each of them with a thousand³³ lashes and mount them on beasts, face to tail, and parade them round about all the city and banish them to a place other than this city ; and bid the crier make cry before them, saying :—This is the reward and the least of the reward

²⁸ i.e., Ibrahim of Mosul, the musician.

²⁹ Arab. "Liyáth" plur. of "Layth," a lion : here warriors are meant.

³⁰ The Abbasides traced their descent from Al-Abbas, Mohammed's uncle, and justly held themselves as belonging to the family of the Prophet. See vol. ii. 61.

³¹ Arab. "Nimshah" = "half-sword."

³² i.e. May thy dwelling-place never fall into ruin. The prayer has, strange to say, been granted. "The present city on the Eastern bank of the Tigris was built by Haroun al-Rashid, and his house stands still there and is an object of reverent curiosity." So says my friend Mr. Grattan Geary (vol. i. p. 212, *Through Asiatic Turkey*, London : Low, 1878). He also gives a sketch of Zubaydah's tomb on the western bank of the Tigris near the suburb which represents old Bagdad : it is a pineapple dome springing from an octagon, both of brick once revetted with white stucco.

³³ In the Bresl. Edit. four hundred. I prefer the exaggerated total.

of whoso multiplieth words and molesteth his neighbours and damageth their delights and stinteth their eating and drinking ! ” Ja’afar received the command and answered “ With obedience ” ; after which he went down from before Abu al-Hasan to the city and did all he had ordered him to do. Meanwhile, Abu al-Hasan abode in the Caliphate, taking and giving, bidding and forbidding and carrying out his command till the end of the day, when he gave leave and permission to withdraw, and the Emirs and Officers of state departed to their several occupations and he looked towards the Chamberlain and the rest of the attendants and said, “ Begone ! ” Then the eunuchs came to him and calling down on him length of life and continuance of weal, walked in attendance upon him and raised the curtain, and he entered the pavilion of the Harem, where he found candles lighted and lamps burning and singing-women smiting on instruments, and ten slave-girls, high-bosomed maids. When he saw this, he was confounded in his wit and said to himself, “ By Allah, I am in truth Commander of the Faithful ! ” presently adding, “ or haply these are of the Jánn and he who was my guest yesternight was one of their kings who saw no way to requite my favours save by commanding his Ifrits to address me as Prince of True Believers. But an these be of the Jann may Allah deliver me in safety from their mischief ! ” As soon as he appeared, the slave-girls rose to him and carrying him up on to the dais,³⁴ brought him a great tray, bespread with the richest viands. So he ate thereof with all his might and main, till he had gotten his fill, when he called one of the handmaids and said to her, “ What is thy name ? ” Replied she, “ My name is Miskah,”³⁵ and he said to another, “ What is thy name ? ” Quoth she, “ My name is Tarkah.”³⁶ Then he asked a third, “ What is thy name ? ” who answered, “ My name is Tohfah ; ”³⁷ and he went on to question the damsels of their names, one after other, till he had learned the ten, when he rose from that place and removed to the wine-chamber. He found it every way complete and saw therein ten great trays, covered with all fruits and cates and every sort of sweetmeats. So he sat down and ate thereof after the measure of his competency, and finding there three

³⁴ i.e., the raised recess at the upper end of an Oriental saloon, and the place of honour, which Lane calls by its Egyptian name “ Liwán.”

³⁵ “ Bit o’ Musk.”

³⁶ “ A gin,” a snare.

³⁷ “ A gift,” a present. It is instructive to compare Abu al-Hasan with Sancho Panza, sprightly Arab wit with grave Spanish humour.

troops of singing-girls, was amazed and made the girls eat. Then he sat and the singers also seated themselves, whilst the black slaves and the white slaves and the eunuchs and pages and boys stood, and of the slave-girls some sat and others stood. The damsels sang and warbled all varieties of melodies and the place rang with the sweetness of the songs, whilst the pipes cried out and the lutes with them wailed, till it seemed to Abu al-Hasan that he was in Paradise, and his heart was heartened and his breast broadened. So he sported and joyance grew on him and he bestowed robes of honour on the damsels and gave and bestowed, challenging this girl and kissing that and toying with a third, plying one with wine and morselling another with meat, till nightfall. All this while the Commander of the Faithful was diverting himself with watching him and laughing, and when night fell he bade one of the slave-girls drop a piece of Bhang in the cup and give it to Abu al-Hasan to drink. So she did his bidding and gave him the cup, which no sooner had he drunk than his head forewent his feet.³⁸ Therewith the Caliph came forth from behind the curtain, laughing, and calling to the attendant who had brought Abu al-Hasan to the palace, said to him, "Carry³⁹ this man to his own place." So Masrur took him up, and carrying him to his own house, set him down in the saloon. Then he went forth from him, and shutting the saloon-door upon him, returned to the Caliph, who slept till the morrow. As for Abu al-Hasan, he gave not over slumbering till Almighty Allah brought on the morning, when he recovered from the drug and awoke, crying out and saying, "Ho, Tuffáhah ! Ho, Ráhat al-Kulúb ! Ho, Miskah ! Ho, Tolfah !" ⁴⁰ And he ceased not calling upon the palace hand-maids till his mother heard him summoning strange damsels, and rising, came to him and said, "Allah's name encompass thee ! Up with thee, O my son, O Abu al-Hasan ! Thou dreamest." So he opened his eyes, and finding an old woman at his head, raised his eyes and said to her, "Who art thou ?" Quoth she, "I am thy mother"; and quoth he, "Thou liest ! I am the Commander of the Faithful, the Viceregent of Allah." Whereupon his mother shrieked

³⁸ i.e., he fell down senseless. The old version has "his head knocked against his knees."

³⁹ Arab. "Waddi;" vulg. Egyptian and Syrian for the classical "Addi" (ii. of Add=preparing to do.) No wonder that Lane complains (iii. 376) of the "vulgar style, abounding in errors."

⁴⁰ "O Apple, O Repose o' Hearts, O Musk, O Choice Gift.

aloud and said to him, "Heaven preserve thy reason ! Be silent, O my son, and cause not the loss of our lives and the wasting of thy wealth, which will assuredly befall us if any hear this talk and carry it to the Caliph." So he rose from his sleep, and finding himself in his own saloon and his mother by him, had doubts of his wit, and said to her, "By Allah, O my mother, I saw myself in a dream in a palace, with slave-girls and Mamelukes about me and in attendance upon me, and I sat upon the throne of the Caliphate and ruled. By Allah, O my mother, this is what I saw, and in very sooth it was no dream !" Then he bethought himself awhile and said, "Assuredly,⁴¹ I am Abu al-Hasan al-Khal'i'a, and this that I saw was only a dream when I was made Caliph and bade and forbade." Then he bethought himself again and said, "Nay, but 'twas not a dream, and I am none other than the Caliph, and indeed I gave gifts and bestowed honour-robcs." Quoth his mother to him, "O my son, thou sportest with thy reason : thou wilt go to the mad-house and become a gazing-stock. Indeed, that which thou hast seen is only from the foul Fiend, and it was an imbroglio of dreams, for at times Satan sporteth with men's wits in all manner of ways." Then said she to him, "O my son, was there any one with thee yesternight ?" And he reflected and said, "Yes ; one lay the night with me and I acquainted him with my case and told him my tale. Doubtless, he was of the Devils, and I, O my mother, even as thou sayest truly, am Abu al-Hasan al-Khal'i'a." She rejoined, "O my son, rejoice in tidings of all good, for yesterday's record is that there came the Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide and his many, and beat the Shaykhs of the mosque and the Imam, each a thousand lashes ; after which they paraded them round about the city, making proclamation before them and saying : —This is the reward and the least of the reward of whoso faileth in goodwill to his neighbours and troubleth on them their lives ! And he banished them from Baghdad. Moreover, the Caliph sent me an hundred dinars and sent to salute me." Whereupon Abu al-Hasan cried out and said to her, "O ill-omened crone, wilt thou contradict me and tell me that I am not the Prince of True Believers ? 'Twas I who commanded Ja'afar the Barmecide to beat the Shaykhs and parade them about the city and make proclamation before them and 'twas

⁴¹ Arab. "Doghri," a pure Turkish word, in Egypt meaning "truly, with truth," straightforwardly ; in Syria—straight (going), directly.

I, very I, who sent thee the hundred dinars and sent to salute thee, and I, O beldam of ill-luck, am in very deed the Commander of the Faithful, and thou art a liar, who would make me out an idiot." So saying, he rose up and fell upon her and beat her with a staff of almond-wood, till she cried out, "Help, O Moslems!" and he increased the beating upon her, till the folk heard her cries and coming to her, found Abu al-Hasan bashing his mother and saying to her, "O old woman of ill-omen, am I not the Commander of the Faithful? Thou hast ensorcelled me!" When the folk heard his words, they said, "This man raveth," and doubted not of his madness. So they came in upon him, and seizing him, pinioned his elbows, and bore him to the Bedlam. Quoth the Superintendent, "What aileth this youth?" and quoth they, "This is a madman, afflicted of the Jinn." "By Allah," cried Abu al-Hasan, "they lie against me! I am no madman, but the Commander of the Faithful." And the Superintendent answered him, saying, "None lieth but thou, O foulest of the Jinn-maddened!" Then he stripped him of his clothes, and clapping on his neck a heavy chain, bound him to a high lattice and fell to beating him two bouts a day and two anights; and he ceased not abiding on this wise the space of ten days. Then his mother came to him and said, "O my son, O Abu al-Hasan, return to thy right reason, for this is the Devil's doing." Quoth he, "Thou sayst sooth, O my mother, and bear thou witness of me that I repent me of that talk and turn me from my madness. So do thou deliver me, for I am nigh upon death." Accordingly his mother went out to the Superintendent and procured his release and he returned to his own house. Now this was at the beginning of the month, and when it ended, Abu al-Hasan longed to drink liquor and, returning to his former habit, furnished his saloon and made ready food and bade bring wine; then, going forth to the bridge, he sat there, expecting one whom he should converse and carouse with, according to his custom. As he sat thus, behold, up came the Caliph and Masrur to him; but Abu al-Hasan saluted them not and said to Al-Rashid, "No friendly welcome to thee, O King of the Jánn!" Quoth Al-Rashid, "What have I done to thee?" and quoth Abu al-Hasan, "What more couldst thou do than what thou hast done to me, O foulest of the Jánn? I have been beaten and thrown into Bedlam, where all said I was Jinn-mad and this was caused by none save thyself. I brought

thee to my house and fed thee with my best ; after which thou didst empower thy Satans and Marids to disport themselves with my wits from morning to evening. So avaunt and aroynt thee and wend thy ways ! ” The Caliph smiled and, seating himself by his side, said to him, “ O my brother, did I not tell thee that I would return to thee ? ” Quoth Abu al-Hasan, “ I have no need of thee ; and as the byword sayeth in verse :

Fro’ my friend, ‘twere meeter and wiser to part, * For what eye sees not born shall ne’er sorrow heart.

And indeed, O my brother, the night thou camest to me and we conversed and caroused together, I and thou, ‘twas as if the Devil came to me and troubled me that night.” Asked the Caliph, “ And who is he, the Devil ? ” and answered Abu al-Hasan, “ He is none other than thou ” ; whereas the Caliph laughed and coaxed him and spake him fair, saying, “ O my brother, when I went out from thee, I forgot the door and left it open and perhaps Satan came in to thee.”⁴² Quoth Abu al-Hasan, “ Ask me not of that which hath betided me. What possessed thee to leave the door open, so that the Devil came in to me and there befel me with him this and that ? ” And he related to him all that had betided him, first and last (and in repetition is no fruition) ; what while the Caliph laughed and hid his laughter. Then said he to Abu al-Hasan, “ Praised be Allah who hath done away from thee whatso irked thee and that I see thee once more in weal ! ” And Abu al-Hasan said, “ Never again will I take thee to cup-companion or sitting-comrade ; for the proverb saith :—Whoso stumbleth on a stone and thereto returneth, upon him he blame and reproach. And thou, O my brother, nevermore will I entertain thee nor company with thee, for that I have not found thy heel propitious to me.”⁴³ But the Caliph coaxed him and said, “ I have been the means of thy winning to thy wish anent the Iman and the Shaykhs.” Abu al-Hasan replied, “ Thou hast ” ; and Al-Rashid continued, “ And haply somewhat may betide which shall gladden thy heart yet more.” Abu al-Hasan asked, “ What dost thou require of

⁴² In the *Mishkát al-Masâbîh* (ii. 341), quoted by Lane, occurs the Hadis, “ Shut your doors anights and when so doing repeat the Basmalah ; for the Devil may not open a door shut in Allah’s name.” A pious Moslem in Egypt always ejaculates, “ In the name of Allah, the Compassionating,” etc., when he locks a door, covers up bread, doffs his clothes, etc., to keep off devils and demons.

⁴³ An Arab idiom meaning, “ I have not found thy good fortune (Ka’b = heel, glory, prosperity) do me any good.”

me?" and the Commander of the Faithful answered, "Verily, I am thy guest; reject not the guest." Quoth Abu al-Hasan, "On condition that thou swear to me by the characts on the seal of Solomon David's son (on the twain be the Peace!) that thou wilt not suffer thine Ifrits to make fun of me." He replied, "To hear is to obey!" Whereupon the Wag took him and brought him into the saloon and set food before him and entreated him with friendly speech. Then he told him all that had befallen him, whilst the Caliph was like to die of stifled laughter; after which Abu al-Hasan removed the tray of food and bringing the wine-service, filled a cup and cracked it three times, then gave it to the Caliph, saying, "O boon-companion mine, I am thy slave, and let not that which I am about to say offend thee, and be thou not vexed, neither do thou vex me." And he recited these verses:

Hear one that wills thee well! Lips none shall bless * Save those who drink for drunk and all transgress.
Ne'er will I cease to swill while night falls dark * Till lout my forehead low upon my tasse:
In wine like liquid sun is my delight * Which clears all care and gladdens allegresse.

When the Caliph heard these his verses and saw how apt he was at couplets he was delighted with exceeding delight, and taking the cup, drank it off, and the twain ceased not to converse and carouse till the wine rose to their heads. Then quoth Abu al-Hasan to the Caliph, "O boon-companion mine, of a truth I am perplexed concerning my affair, for meseemed I was Commander of the Faithful and ruled and gave gifts and largesse, and in very deed, O my brother, it was not a dream." Quoth the Caliph, "These were the imbroglios of sleep," and crumbling a bit of Bhang into the cup, said to him, "By my life, do thou drink this cup"; and said Abu al-Hasan, "Surely I will drink it from thy hand." Then he took the cup and drank it off, and no sooner had it settled in his stomach than his head fell to the ground before his feet. Now his manners and fashions pleased the Caliph, and the excellence of his composition and his frankness, and he said in himself, "I will assuredly make him my cup-companion and sitting-comrade." So he rose forthright and saying to Masrur, "Take him up," returned to the palace. Accordingly, the eunuch took up Abu al-Hasan and carrying him to the palace of the Caliphate, set him down before Al-Rashid, who bade the slaves and slave-girls compass him about,

whilst he himself hid in a place where Abu al-Hasan could not see him. Then he commanded one of the hand-maidens to take the lute and strike it over the Wag's head, whilst the rest smote upon their instruments. So they played and sang, till Abu al-Hasan awoke at the last of the night and heard the symphony of lutes and tambourines and the sound of the flutes and the singing of the slave-girls, whereupon he opened his eyes and finding himself in the palace, with the hand-maids and eunuchs about him, exclaimed, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Come to my help this night which meseems more unlucky than the former! Verily, I am fearful of the Madhouse and of that which I suffered therein the first time, and I doubt not but the Devil is come to me again, as before. O Allah, my Lord, put thou Satan to shame!" Then he shut his eyes and laid his head in his sleeve, and fell to laughing softly and raising his head bytimes, but still found the apartment lighted and the girls singing. Presently, one of the eunuchs sat down at his head and said to him, "Sit up, O Prince of True Believers, and look on thy palace and thy slave-girls." Said Abu al-Hasan, "Under the veil of Allah, am I in truth Commander of the Faithful, and does thou not lie? Yesterday I rode not forth neither ruled, but drank and slept, and this eunuch cometh to make me rise." Then he sat up and recalled to thought that which had betided him with his mother and how he had beaten her and entered the Bedlam, and he saw the marks of the beating, wherewith the Superintendent had beaten him, and was perplexed concerning his affair and pondered in himself, saying, "By Allah, I know not how my case is nor what is this that betideth me!" Then, gazing at the scene around him, he said privily, "All these are of the Jánn in human shape, and I commit my case to Allah." Presently he turned to one of the damsels and said to her, "Who am I?" Quoth she, "Thou art the Commander of the Faithful"; and quoth he, "Thou liest, O calamity!" If I be indeed the Commander of the Faithful, bite my finger." So she came to him and bit it with all her might, and he said to her, "It doth suffice." Then he asked the Chief Eunuch, "Who am I?" and he answered, "Thou art the Commander of the Faithful." So he left him and returned to his wonderment: then, turning to a little white slave, said to him, "Bite my ear"; and he bent his head low down to him and put his ear to his mouth. Now

"Arab. "Yá Nakbah" =a calamity to those who have to do with thee!"

the Mameluke was young and lacked sense ; so he closed his teeth upon Abu al-Hasan's ear with all his might, till he came near to sever it ; and he knew not Arabic, so, as often as the Wag said to him, " It doth suffice," he concluded that he said, " Bite like a vice," and redoubled his bite and made his teeth meet in the ear, whilst the damsels were diverted from him with hearkening to the singing-girls, and Abu al-Hasan cried out for succour from the boy and the Caliph lost his senses for laughter. Then he dealt the boy a cuff, and he let go his ear, whereupon all present fell down with laughter and said to the little Mameluke, " Art mad that thou bitest the Caliph's ear on this wise !" And Abu al-Hasan cried to them, " Sufficeth ye not, O ye wretched Jinns, that which hath befallen me ? But the fault is not yours : the fault is of your Chief who transmewed you from Jinn shape to mortal shape. I seek refuge against you this night by the Throne-verse and the Chapter of Sincerity and the Two Preventives !" So saying the Wag put off his clothes till he was naked, with prickle and breech exposed, and danced among the slave-girls. They bound his hands and he wantoned among them, while they died of laughing at him and the Caliph swooned away for excess of laughter. Then he came to himself and going forth the curtain to Abu al-Hasan, said to him, " Out on thee, O Abu al-Hasan ! Thou slayest me with laughter." So he turned to him, and knowing him said to him, " By Allah, 'tis thou slayest me and slayest my mother and slewest the Shaykhs and the Imam of the Mosque !" After which he kissed ground before him and prayed for the permanence of his prosperity and the endurance of his days. The Caliph at once robed him in a rich robe and gave him a thousand dinars ; and presently he took the Wag into especial favour and married him and bestowed largesse on him and lodged him with himself in the palace and made him of the chief of his cup-companions, and indeed he was preferred with him above them and the Caliph advanced him over them all. Now they were ten in number, to wit, Al-'Ijlí and Al-Rakáshi and 'Ibdán and Hasan al-Farazdak and Al-Lauz and Al-Sakar and Omar al-Tartís and Abu Nowas and Abu Ishak al-Nadím and Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a, and by each of them hangeth a story which is told in other than this book.⁴⁵ And indeed Abu al-Hasan became high in honour with

⁴⁵ Here the author indubitably speaks for himself, forgetting that he ended Night cclxxxi. (Bresl. iv. 168), and began that following with Shahrazad's usual formula.

the Caliph and favoured above all, so that he sat with him and the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, whose trearess Nuzhat al-Fuad ⁴⁶ hight, was given to him in marriage. After this Abu al-Hasan the Wag abode with his wife in eating and drinking and all delight of life, till whatso was with them went the way of money, when he said to her, " Harkye, O Nuzhat al-Fuad ! " Said she, " At thy service " ; and he continued, " I have it in mind to play a trick on the Caliph and thou shalt do the like with the Lady Zubaydah, and we will take of them at once, to begin with, two hundred dinars and two pieces of silk." She rejoined, " As thou willest, but what thinkest thou to do ? " And he said, " We will feign ourselves dead, and this is the trick. I will die before thee and lay myself out, and do thou spread over me a silken napkin and loose my turban over me and tie my toes and lay on my stomach a knife and a little salt.⁴⁷ Then let down thy hair and betake thyself to thy mistress Zubaydah, tearing thy dress and slapping thy face and crying out. She will ask thee, What aileth thee ? and do thou answer her, May thy head outlive Abu al-Hasan the Wag ; for he is dead. She will mourn for me and weep and bid her new trearess give thee an hundred dinars and a piece of silk ⁴⁸ and will say to thee :—Go, lay him out and carry him forth. So do thou take of her the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and come back, and when thou returnest to me, I will rise up and thou shalt lie down in my place, and I will go to the Caliph and say to him, May thy head outlive Nuzhat al-Fuad, and rend my raiment and pluck out my beard. He will mourn for thee and say to his treasurer, Give Abu al-Hasan an hundred dinars and a piece of silk. Then he will say to me, Go ; lay her out and carry her forth ; and I will come back to thee." Therewith Nuzhat al-Fuad rejoiced and said, " Indeed, this is an excellent device." Then Abu al-Hasan stretched himself out forthright and she shut his eyes and tied his feet and covered him with the napkin and did whatso her lord had bidden her ; after which she tare her gear and bared her head and letting down her hair, went in to the Lady Zubaydah, crying out and weeping. When the

⁴⁶ i.e. " Delight of the vitals " (or heart).

⁴⁷ " Kalb " here is not heart, but stomach. The big toes of the Moslem corpse are still tied in most countries, and in some a sword is placed upon the body ; but I am not aware that a knife and salt (both believed to repel evil spirits) are so used in Cairo.

⁴⁸ The Moslem, who may not wear unmixed silk during his lifetime, may be shrouded in it. I have noted that the " Shukkah," or piece, averages six feet in length.

Princess saw her in this state, she cried, "What plight is this ? What is thy story and what maketh thee weep ?" And Nuzhat al-Fuad answered, weeping and loud-wailing the while, "O my lady, may thy head live and mayst thou survive Abu al-Hasan al Khali'a ; for he is dead !" The Lady Zubaydah mourned for him and said, "Alas, poor Abu al-Hasan the Wag !" and she shed tears for him awhile. Then she bade her treasress give Nuzhat al-Fuad an hundred dinars and a piece of silk and said to her, "O Nuzhat al-Fuad, go, lay him out and carry him forth." So she took the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and returned to her dwelling, rejoicing, and went in to her spouse and acquainted him what had befallen, whereupon he rose and rejoiced and girdled his middle and danced and took the hundred dinars and the piece of silk and laid them up. Then he laid out Nuzhat al-Fuad and did with her as she had done with him ; after which he rent his raiment and plucked out his beard and disordered his turban and ran out nor ceased running till he came in to the Caliph, who was sitting in the judgment-hall, and he in this plight, beating his breast. The Caliph asked him, "What aileth thee, O Abu al-Hasan ?" and he wept and answered, "Would heaven thy cup-companion had never been and would his hour had never come !" Quoth the Caliph, "Tell me thy case" : and quoth Abu al-Hasan, "O my lord, may thy head outlive Nuzhat al-Fuad !" The Caliph exclaimed, "There is no god but God" ; and smote hand upon hand. Then he comforted Abu al-Hasan and said to him, "Grieve not, for we will bestow upon thee a bed-fellow other than she." And he ordered the treasurer to give him an hundred dinars and a piece of silk. Accordingly the treasurer did what the Caliph bade him, and Al-Rashid said to him, "Go, lay her out and carry her forth and make her a handsome funeral." So Abu al-Hasan took that which he had given him, and returning to his house, rejoicing, went in to Nuzhat al-Fuad and said to her, "Arise, for our wish is won." Hereat she arose and he laid before her the hundred ducats and the piece of silk, whereat she rejoiced, and they added the gold to the gold and the silk to the silk and sat talking and laughing each to other. Meanwhile, when Abu al-Hasan fared forth the presence of the Caliph and went to lay out Nuzhat al-Fuad, the Commander of the Faithful mourned for her and dismissing the divan, arose and betook himself, leaning upon Masrur, the Sworder of his

vengeance, to the Lady Zubaydah, that he might condole with her for her hand-maid. He found her sitting weeping and awaiting his coming, so she might condole with him for his boon-companion Abu al-Hasan the Wag. So he said to her, " May thy head outlive thy slave-girl Nuzhat al-Fuad ! " and said she, " O my lord, Allah preserve my slave-girl ! Mayst thou live and long survive thy boon-companion Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a ; for he is dead." The Caliph smiled and said to his eunuch, " O Masrur, verily women are little of wit. Allah upon thee, say, was not Abu al-Hasan with me but now ? " ⁴⁸ Quoth the Lady Zubaydah, laughing from a heart full of wrath, " Wilt thou not leave thy jesting ? Sufficeth thee not that Abu al-Hasan is dead, but thou must put to death my slave-girl also and bereave us of the twain, and style me little of wit ? " The Caliph answered, " Indeed, 'tis Nuzhat al-Fuad who is dead." And the Lady Zubaydah said, " Indeed he hath not been with thee, nor hast thou seen him, and none was with me but now save Nuzhat al-Fuad, and she sorrowful, weeping, with her clothes torn to tatters. I exhorted her to patience and gave her an hundred dinars and a piece of silk ; and indeed I was awaiting thy coming, so I might console thee for thy cup-companion Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a, and was about to send for thee." The Caliph laughed and said, " None is dead save Nuzhat al-Fuad " ; and she, " No, no, good my lord ; none is dead but Abu al-Hasan the Wag." With this the Caliph waxed wroth, and the Hâshimî vein ⁵⁰ started out from between his eyes and throbbed : and he cried out to Masrur and said to him, " Fare thee forth to the house of Abu al-Hasan the Wag, and see which of them is dead." So Masrur went out, running, and the Caliph said to the Lady Zubaydah, " Wilt thou lay me a wager ? " And said she, " Yes, I will wager, and I say that Abu al-Hasan is dead." Rejoined the Caliph, " And I wager and say that none is dead save Nuzhat al-Fuad ; and the stake between me and thee shall be the Garden of Pleasance against thy palace and the Pavilion of Pictures." ⁵¹ So they agreed upon this and sat awaiting Masrur's return with the news. As for the

⁴⁸ Here the story-teller omits to say that Masrur bore witness to the Caliph's statement.

⁵⁰ Arab. " Irk al-Hâshimi." Lane remarks, " Whether it was so in Hashim himself (or only in his descendants), I do not find ; but it is mentioned amongst the characteristics of his great-grandson, the Prophet."

⁵¹ Arab. " Tamâsîl " = generally carved images, which, amongst Moslems, always suggest idols and idolatry.

eunuch, he ceased not running till he came to the by-street, wherein was the stead of Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a. Now the Wag was comfortably seated and leaning back against the lattice,⁵² and chancing to look round, saw Masrur running along the street and said to Nuzhat al-Fuad, " Meseemeth the Caliph, when I went forth from him dismissed the Divan and went in to the Lady Zubaydah, to condole with her ; whereupon she arose and condoled with him, saying, Allah increase thy recompence for the loss of Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a ! And he said to her, None is dead save Nuzhat al-Fuad, may thy head outlive her ! Quoth she, 'Tis not she who is dead, but Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a, thy boon companion. And quoth he, None is dead save Nuzhat al-Fuad. And they waxed so obstinate that the Caliph became wroth and they laid a wager, and he hath sent Masrur the Sworder to see who is dead. Now, therefore, 'twere best that thou lie down, so he may sight thee and go and acquaint the Caliph and confirm my saying." ⁵³ So Nuzhat al-Fuad stretched herself out and Abu al-Hasan covered her with her mantilla and sat weeping at her head. Presently, Masrur the eunuch suddenly came in to him and saluted him, and seeing Nuzhat al-Fuad stretched out, uncovered her face and said, " There is no god but God ! Our sister Nuzhat al-Fuad is dead indeed. How sudden was the stroke of Destiny ! Allah have ruth on thee and acquit thee of all charge ! " Then he returned and related what had passed before the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah, and he laughing as he spoke. " O accursed one," cried the Caliph, " this is no time for laughter ! Tell us which is dead of them." Masrur replied, " By Allah, O my lord, Abu al-Hasan is well, and none is dead but Nuzhat al-Fuad." Quoth the Caliph to Zubaydah, " Thou hast lost thy pavilion in thy play," and he jeered at her and said, " O Masrur, tell her what thou sawest." Quoth the eunuch, " Verily, O my lady, I ran without ceasing till I came in to Abu al-Hasan in his house and found Nuzhat al-Fuad lying dead and Abu al-Hasan sitting tearful at her head. I saluted him and condoled with him and sat down by his side and uncovered the face of Nuzhat al-Fuad

⁵² The " Shubbák " here would be the " Mashrabiyah," or latticed balcony, projecting from the saloon-wall, and containing room for three or more sitters. It is Lane's " Meshrebeeyah," sketched in M.E. (Introduction) and now has become familiar to Englishmen.

⁵³ This is to show the cleverness of Abu al-Hasan, who had calculated upon the difference between Al-Rashid and Zubaydah. Such marvels of perspicacity are frequent enough in the folk-lore of the Arabs.

and saw her dead and her face swollen.⁵⁴ So I said to him :—Carry her out forthwith, so we may pray over her. He replied :—"Tis well ; and I left him to lay her out and came hither, that I might tell you the news." The Prince of True Believers laughed and said, "Tell it again and again to thy lady Little-wits." When the Lady Zubaydah heard Masrur's words and those of the Caliph she was wroth and said, "None is little of wit save he who believeth a black slave." And she abused Masrur, whilst the Commander of the Faithful laughed : and the eunuch, vexed at this, said to the Caliph, "He spake sooth who said :—Women are little of wits and lack religion."⁵⁵ Then said the Lady Zubaydah to the Caliph, "O Commander of the Faithful, thou sportest and jestest with me, and this slave hoodwinketh me, the better to please thee ; but I will send and see which of them be dead." And he answered, saying, "Send one who shall see which of them is dead." So the Lady Zubaydah cried out to an old duenna, and said to her, "Hie thee to the house of Nuzhat al-Fuad in haste and see who is dead and loiter not." And she used hard words to her.⁵⁶ So the old woman went out running, whilst the Prince of True Believers and Masrur laughed, and she ceased not running till she came into the street. Abu al-Hasan saw her, and knowing her, said to his wife, "O Nuzhat al-Fuad, meseemeth the Lady Zubaydah hath sent to us to see who is dead and hath not given credit to Masrur's report of thy death : accordingly, she hath despatched the old crone, her duenna, to discover the truth. So it behoveth me to be dead in my turn for the sake of thy credit with the Lady Zubaydah." Hereat he lay down and stretched himself out, and she covered him and bound his eyes and feet and sat in tears at his head. Presently the old woman came in to her and saw her sitting at Abu al-Hasan's head, weeping and recounting his fine qualities ; and when she saw the old trot, she cried out and said to her, "See what hath befallen me ! Indeed Abu al-Hasan is dead and hath left me lone and lorn !" Then she shrieked out and rent her raiment and said to the crone, "O my mother, how very good he was to me !" ⁵⁷ Quoth the other, "Indeed thou art excused, for thou

⁵⁴ An artful touch, showing how a tale grows by repetition. In Abu al-Hasan's case (*infra*) the eyes are swollen by the swathes.

⁵⁵ A Hadis attributed to the Prophet, and very useful to Moslem husbands when wives differ overmuch with them in opinion.

⁵⁶ Arab, "Masarat fi-há," which Lane renders, "And she threw money to her."

⁵⁷ A saying common throughout the world, especially when the afflicted widow intends to marry again at the first opportunity.

wast used to him and he to thee." Then she considered what Masrur had reported to the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah and said to her, "Indeed, Masrur goeth about to cast discord between the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah." Asked Nuzhat al-Fuad, "And what is the cause of discord, O my mother?" and the other replied, "O my daughter, Masrur came to the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah and gave them news of thee that thou wast dead and that Abu al-Hasan was well." Nuzhat al-Fuad said to her, "O naughty mine,⁶⁸ I was with my lady just now and she gave me an hundred dinars and a piece of silk; and now see my case and that which hath befallen me! Indeed, I am bewildered, and how shall I do, and I lone, and lorn? Would heaven I had died and he had lived!" Then she wept and with her wept the old woman, who, going up to Abu al-Hasan and uncovering his face, saw his eyes bound and swollen for the swathing. So she covered him again and said, "Indeed, O Nuzhat al-Fuad, thou art afflicted in Abu al-Hasan!" Then she condoled with her and going out from her, ran along the street till she came in to the Lady Zubaydah and related to her the story; and the Princess said to her, laughing, "Tell it over again to the Caliph, who maketh me out little of wit, and lacking of religion, and who made this ill-omened liar of a slave presume to contradict me." Quoth Masrur, "This old woman lieth; for I saw Abu al-Hasan well and Nuzhat al-Fuad it was who lay dead." Quoth the duenna, "'Tis thou that liest, and wouldst fain cast discord between the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah." And Masrur cried, "None lieth but thou, O old woman of ill-omen, an thy lady believeth thee she must be in her dotage." Whereupon the Lady Zubaydah cried out at him, and in very sooth she was enraged with him and with his speech and shed tears. Then said the Caliph to her, "I lie and my eunuch lieth, and thou liest and thy waiting-woman lieth; so 'tis my rede we go, all four of us together, that we may see which of us telleth the truth." Masrur said, "Come, let us go, that I may do to this ill-omened old woman evil deeds⁶⁹ and deal her a sound drubbing for her lying." And the duenna answered him, "O dotard, is thy wit like unto my wit? Indeed, thy wit is as the hen's wit." Masrur was incensed at her words and would have laid violent hands on her, but the Lady Zubaydah pushed him away from her and said to him, "Her

⁶⁸ Arab. "Yā Khālati" = O my mother's sister; addressed by a woman to an elderly dame.

⁶⁹ i.e. That I may put her to shame.

truth-speaking will presently be distinguished from thy truth-speaking and her leasing from thy leasing." Then they all four arose, laying wagers one with other, and went forth a-foot from the palace-gate and hied on till they came in at the gate of the street where Abu al-Hasan al-Khali'a dwelt. He saw them and said to his wife Nuzhat al-Fuad, "Verily, all that is sticky is not a pancake⁶⁰ they cook, nor every time shall the crock escape the shock. It seemeth the old woman hath gone and told her lady and acquainted her with our case, and she hath disputed with Masrur the eunuch and they have have laid wagers each with other about our death and are come to us, all four, the Caliph and the eunuch and the Lady Zubaydah and the old trot." When Nuzhat al-Fuad heard this, she started up from her outstretched posture and asked, "How shall we do?" whereto he answered, "We will both feign ourselves dead together and stretch ourselves out and hold our breath." So she hearkened unto him and they both lay down on the place where they usually slept the siesta⁶¹ and bound their feet and shut their eyes and covered themselves with the veil and held their breath. Presently, up came the Caliph, Zubaydah, Masrur and the old woman, and entering, found Abu al-Hasan the Wag and wife both stretched out as dead; which when the Lady saw, she wept and said, "They ceased not to bring ill-news of my slave-girl till she died, methinketh Abu al-Hasan's death was grievous to her and that she died after him."⁶² Quoth the Caliph, "Thou shalt not prevent me with thy prattle and prate. She certainly died before Abu al-Hasan, for he came to me with his raiment rent and his beard plucked out, beating his breast with two bits of unbaked brick,⁶³ and I gave him an hundred dinars and a piece of silk and said to him, Go, bear her forth and I will give thee a béd-fellow other than she and handsomer, and she shall be in stead of her. But it would appear that her death was no light matter to him and he died after her;⁶⁴ so it

⁶⁰ Arab. "Zalâbiyah."

⁶¹ Arab. "'Alâ al-Kaylah," which Mr. Payne renders by "Siesta-carpet." Lane reads "Kiblah" ("in the direction of the Kiblah") and notes that some Moslems turn the corpse's head towards Mecca and others the right side, including the face. So the old version reads "feet towards Mecca." But the preposition "Alâ" requires the former sig.

⁶² i.e. of grief for his loss.

⁶³ Arab. "Tobâni" which Lane renders "two clods." I have noted that the Tob (Span. Adobe=At-Tob) is a sunbaked brick. Beating the bosom with such material is still common amongst Moslem mourners of the lower class, and the hardness of the blow gives the measure of the grief.

⁶⁴ i.e. of grief for her loss.

is I who have beaten thee and gotten thy stake." The Lady Zubaydah answered him in words galore and the dispute between them waxed sore. At last the Caliph sat down at the heads of the pair and said, "By the tomb of the Apostle of Allah (whom may He save and assain !) and the sepulchres of my fathers and forefathers, whoso will tell me which of them died before the other, I will willingly give him a thousand dinars ! " When Abu al-Hasan heard the Caliph's words, he sprang up in haste and said, "I died first, O Commander of the Faithful ! Here with the thousand dinars and acquit thee of thine oath and the swear thou sworest." Nuzhat al-Fuad rose also and stood up before the Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah, who both rejoiced in this and in their safety, and the Princess chid her slave-girl. Then the Caliph and Zubaydah gave them joy of their well-being and knew that this death was a trick to get the gold ; and the Lady said to Nuzhat al-Fuad, "Thou shouldst have sought of me that which thou neededst, without this fashion, and not have burned ^{as} my heart for thee." And she, "Verily, I was ashamed, O my lady." As for the Caliph, he swooned away for laughing and said, "O Abu al-Hasan, thou wilt never cease to be a wag and do peregrine things and prodigious ! " Quoth he, "O Commander of the Faithful, this trick I played off for that the money which thou gavest me was exhausted, and I was ashamed to ask of thee again. When I was single, I could never keep money in hand ; but since thou marriedst me to this damsel, if I possessed even thy wealth, I should lay it waste. Wherefore when all that was in my hand was spent, I wrought this sleight, so I might get of thee the hundred dinars and the piece of silk ; and all this is an alms from our lord. But now make haste to give me the thousand dinars and acquit thee of thine oath." The Caliph and the Lady Zubaydah laughed and returned to the palace ; and he gave Abu al-Hasan the thousand dinars saying, "Take them as a *douceur* for thy preservation from death," whilst her mistress did the like with Nuzhat al-Fuad, honouring her with the same words. Moreover, the Caliph increased the Wag in his solde and supplies, and he and his wife ceased not to live in joy and contentment, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and Severer of societies, the Plunderer of palaces, and the Garnerer of graves.

^{as} Arab. "Ihtirák" often used in the metaphorical sense of consuming, torturing.

THE TAILOR AND THE LADY AND THE CAPTAIN¹

It is related that a Tailor was sitting in his shop facing a tall house tenanted by a Yúzbáshi, and this man had a wife who was unique for beauty and loveliness. Now one day of the days as she looked out at the latticed window the Snip espied her and was distraught by her comeliness and seemlihead. So he became engrossed by love of her and remained all day a-gazing at the casement disturbed and perturbed, and as often as she approached the window and peered out therefrom, he would stare at her and say to her, "O my lady and O core of my heart, good morning to thee; and do thou have mercy upon one sore affected by his affection to thee; one whose eyes sleep not by night for thy fair sake." "This pimp be Jinnmad!" quoth the Captain's wife, "and as often as I look out at the window he dareth bespeak me: haply the folk shall say:—Indeed she must needs be his mistress." But the Tailor persevered in this proceeding for a while of days until the lady was offended thereby and said in her mind, "Walláhi, there is no help but that I devise for him a device which shall make unlawful to him this his staring and casting sheep's eyes at my casement; nay more, I will work for ousting him from his shop." So one day of the days when the Yúzbáshi went from home, his wife arose and adorned and beautified herself, and donning the bestest of what dresses and decorations she had, despatched one of her slave-girls to the Tailor, instructing her to say to him:—"My lady salaameth to thee and biddeth thee come and drink coffee with her." The handmaiden went to his shop and delivered the message; and he, when hearing these words, waxed bewildered of wits and rose up quivering in his clothes;—And Shahrazad was surprised by the dawn of day and fell silent and ceased to say her permitted say. Then quoth

¹ Scott (vi. 386) "The Cauzee's story": Gautier (vi. 406) does not translate it.

her sister Dunyazad, " How sweet is thy story, O sister mine, and how enjoyable and delectable ! " Quoth she, " And where is this compared with that I would relate to you on the coming night an the King suffer me to survive ? " Now when it was the next night and that was

THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD NIGHT.

Dunyazad said to her, " Allah upon thee, O my sister, an thou be other than sleepy, finish for us thy tale that we may cut short the watching of this our latter night ! " She replied : —With love and good will ! It hath reached me, O auspicious King, the director, the right-guiding, lord of the rede which is benefiting and of deeds fair-seeming and worthy celebrating, that when the Tailor heard the girl's words, he quivered in his clothes ; but indeed he recked not aught of the wiles of womankind. So after padlocking his shop he went with her to the house and walked upstairs, where he was met by the lady with a face like the rondure of the moon, and she greeted him right merrily, and taking him by the hand led him to a well-mattressed Divan and bade her slave-girl serve him with coffee, and as he drank it she sat facing him. Presently the twain fell to conversing, she and he ; and she soothed him with sweet speech, whilst he went clean out of his mind for the excess of her beauty and loveliness. This lasted until near midday, when she bade serve the dinner-trays, and took seat in front of him, and he began picking up morsels designed for his lips and teeth, but in lieu thereof thrust them into his eye. She laughed at him, but hardly had he swallowed the second mouthful and the third when behold, the door was knocked, whereupon she looked out from the casement and cried, " Oh, my honour ! this is my husband." Hereat the man's hands and knees began to quake, and he said to her, " Whither shall I wend ? " Said she, " Go into this closet," and forthright she thrust him into a cabinet and shot the bolt upon him and taking the key she tare out one of its teeth ² and put it in her pocket. After this she went

¹ The " Miftah " (prop. " Miftah ") or key used throughout the Moslem East is a bit of wood, 7-14 inches long, and provided with 4-10 small iron pins which correspond with an equal number of holes in the " Dabbah " or wooden bolt. If one of these teeth be withdrawn the lock will not open. Lane (M.E. Introduction) has a sketch of the " Miftah " and " Dabbah."

down and opened the door to her husband who walked upstairs ; and finding the dinner trays bespread, asked her, " What is this ? " She answered, " I and my lover have been dining together." " And what may be thy lover ? " " Here he is." ³ " Where may he be ? " to which she replied, " He is inside this closet." Now as soon as the Tailor heard her say this say, he piddled in his bag-breeches and besouled himself and he was in a filthy state with skite and piss.⁴ Hereupon the Captain asked, " And where's the key ? " and she answered, " Here it is with me." ⁵ " Bring it out," said he, so she pulled it from her pocket and handed it to him. The Captain took the key from his spouse and applying it to the wooden bolt of the cabinet rattled it to and fro ⁶ but it would not open ; so the wife came up to him and cried, " Allah upon thee, O my lord, what wilt thou do with my playmate ? " Said he, " I will slay him ! " and said she, " No, 'tis my opinion that thou hadst better pinion him and bind him as if crucified to the pillar in the court floor and then smite him with thy sword upon the neck and cut off his head ; for I, during my born days, never saw a criminal put to death and now 'tis my desire to sight one done to die." " Sooth is thy speech," quoth he : so he took the key, and fitting it into the wooden bolt would have drawn it back, but it could not move because a tooth had been drawn therefrom, and the while he was rattling at the bolt his wife said to him, " O my lord, 'tis my desire that thou lop off his hands and his feet until he shall become marked by his maims ; ⁷ and after do thou smite his neck." " A sensible speech," cried the husband, and during the whole time her mate was striving to pull the bolt she kept saying to him, " Do this and do that with the fellow," and he ceased not

³ In text " Ayoh " which is here, I hold, a corruption of " I (or Ayy) hú " = " yes indeed he." [I take " aywah " (as I would read the word) to be a different spelling for " aywa " = yes indeed, which according to Spitta Bey, Gr. p. 168 is a contraction of " Ay (I) wa'llahi," yes by Allah, " What ? thy lover ? " asks the husband, and she emphatically affirms the fact, to frighten the concealed tailor.—St.]

⁴ In the Arab. " Al-Ashkhákh," plur. of " Shakhkh " and literally " the stakes " meaning either dejection. [I read : " bi 'l-Shakhákh," the usual modern word for urine. " 'Alayya Shakhákh " is : I want to make water. See Dozy Suppl. s.v.—St.]

⁵ In text " Ahú ma'i "—pure Fellah speech.

⁶ In the Arab. " lakiaka-há "—an onomatopœia.

⁷ In text " Ilá an yasr Karmu-hu." The ✓ Karm originally means cutting a slip of skin from the camel's nose by way of mark, in lieu of the normal branding.

saying to her, “ ‘Tis well.” All this and the Tailor sat hearkening to their words and melting in his skin ; but at last the wife burst out laughing until she fell upon her back and her husband asked her, “ Whereat this merriment ? ” Answered she, “ I make mock of thee for that thou art wanting in wits and wisdom.” Quoth he, “ Wherefore ? ” and quoth she, “ O my lord, had I a lover and had he been with me should I have told aught of him to thee ? Nay ; I said in my mind :—Do such and such with the Captain and let’s see whether he will believe or disbelieve. Now when I spake thou didst credit me and it became apparent to me that thou art wanting in wits.” Cried he to her, “ Allah disappoint thee ! Dost thou make jibe and jape of me ? I also said in my thoughts :—How can a man be with her and she speak of him in the face of me ? ” So he arose and took seat with her, the twain close together, at the dinner-tray and she fell to morselling him and he to morselling her, and they laughed and ate until they had their sufficiency and were filled ; then they washed their hands and drank coffee. After this they were cheered and they toyed together and played the two-backed beast until their pleasure was fulfilled and this was about mid-afternoon— And Shahrazad was surprised by the dawn of day and fell silent and ceased saying her permitted say. Then quoth her sister Dunyazad, “ How sweet and tasteful is thy tale, O sister mine, and how enjoyable and delectable ! ” Quoth she, “ And where is this compared with that I would relate to you on the coming night an the Sovran suffer me to survive ? ” Now when it was the next night, and that was

THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH NIGHT,

Dunyazad said to her, “ Allah upon thee, O my sister, an thou be other than sleepy, finish for us thy tale, that we may cut short the watching of this our latter night ! ” She replied :—With love and good will ! It hath reached me, O auspicious King, the director, the right-guiding, lord of the rede which is benefiting and of deeds fair-seeming and worthy celebrating, that the Yuzbashi fell to toying with his wife, and thrusting and foining at her cleft,⁸ her solution

⁸ In text “Yazghaz-hā fi shikkati-ha,” the verb being probably a clerical error for “Yazaghzagħ,” from √ “Zaghzagħa” = he opened a skin bag.

of continuity, and she wriggled to and fro to him, and bucked up and down, after which he tumbled her and both were *in gloria*.⁹ This lasted until near mid-afternoon when he arose and went forth to the Hammam. But as soon as he left the house she opened the cabinet and brought out the Tailor, saying, "Hast thou seen what awaiteth thee, O pander, O impure? Now, by Allah, and thou continue staring at the windows or durst bespeak me with one single word it shall be the death of thee. This time I have set thee free, but a second time I will work to the wasting of thy heart's

⁹ This is the far-famed balcony-scene in *Fanny* (of Ernest Feydeau translated into English and printed by Vizetelly and Co.) that phenomenal specimen of morbid and unmasculine French (or rather Parisian) sentiment, which contrasts so powerfully with the healthy and manly tone of *The Nights*. Here also the story conveys a moral lesson and, contrary to custom, the husband has the best of the affair. To prove that my judgment is not too sévère, let me quote the following passages from a well-known and popular French novelist, translated by an English littérateur and published by a respectable London firm.

In *A Ladies' Man*, by Guy de Maupassant, we read:—

Page 62.—And the conversation, descending from elevated theories concerning love, strayed into the flowery garden of polished blackguardism. It was the moment of clever double meanings; veils raised by words, as petticoats are lifted by the wind; tricks of language, cleverly disguised audacities; sentences which reveal nude images in covered phrases, which cause the vision of all that may not be said to flit rapidly before the eyes of the mind, and allow well-bred people the enjoyment of a kind of subtle and mysterious love, a species of impure mental contact, due to the simultaneous evocations of secret, shameful, and longed-for pleasures.

Page 166.—George and Madeleine amused themselves with watching all these couples, the woman in summer toilette and the man darkly outlined beside her. It was a huge flood of lovers flowing towards the Bois, beneath the starry and heated sky. No sound was heard save the dull rumble of wheels. They kept passing by, two by two in each vehicle, leaning back on the seat, clasped one against the other, lost in dreams of desire, quivering with the anticipation of coming caresses. The warm shadow seemed full of kisses. A sense of spreading lust rendered the air heavier and more suffocating. All the couples, intoxicated with the same idea, the same ardour, shed a fever about them.

Page 187.—As soon as she was alone with George, she clasped him in her arms, exclaiming: "Oh! my darling Pretty-boy, I love you more and more every day."

The cab conveying them rocked like a ship.

"It is not so nice as our own room," said she.

He answered: "Oh, no." But he was thinking of Madame Waller.

Page 198.—He kissed her neck, her eyes, her lips with eagerness, without her being able to avoid his furious caresses, and whilst repulsing him, whilst shrinking from his mouth, she, despite herself, returned his kisses. All at once she ceased to struggle, and, vanquished, resigned, allowed him to undress her. One by one he neatly and rapidly stripped off the different articles of clothing with the light fingers of a lady's maid. She had snatched her bodice from his hands to hide her face in it, and remained standing amidst the garments fallen at her feet. He seized her in his arms and bore her towards the couch. Then she murmured in his ear in a broken voice, "I swear to you, I swear to you, that I have never had a lover."

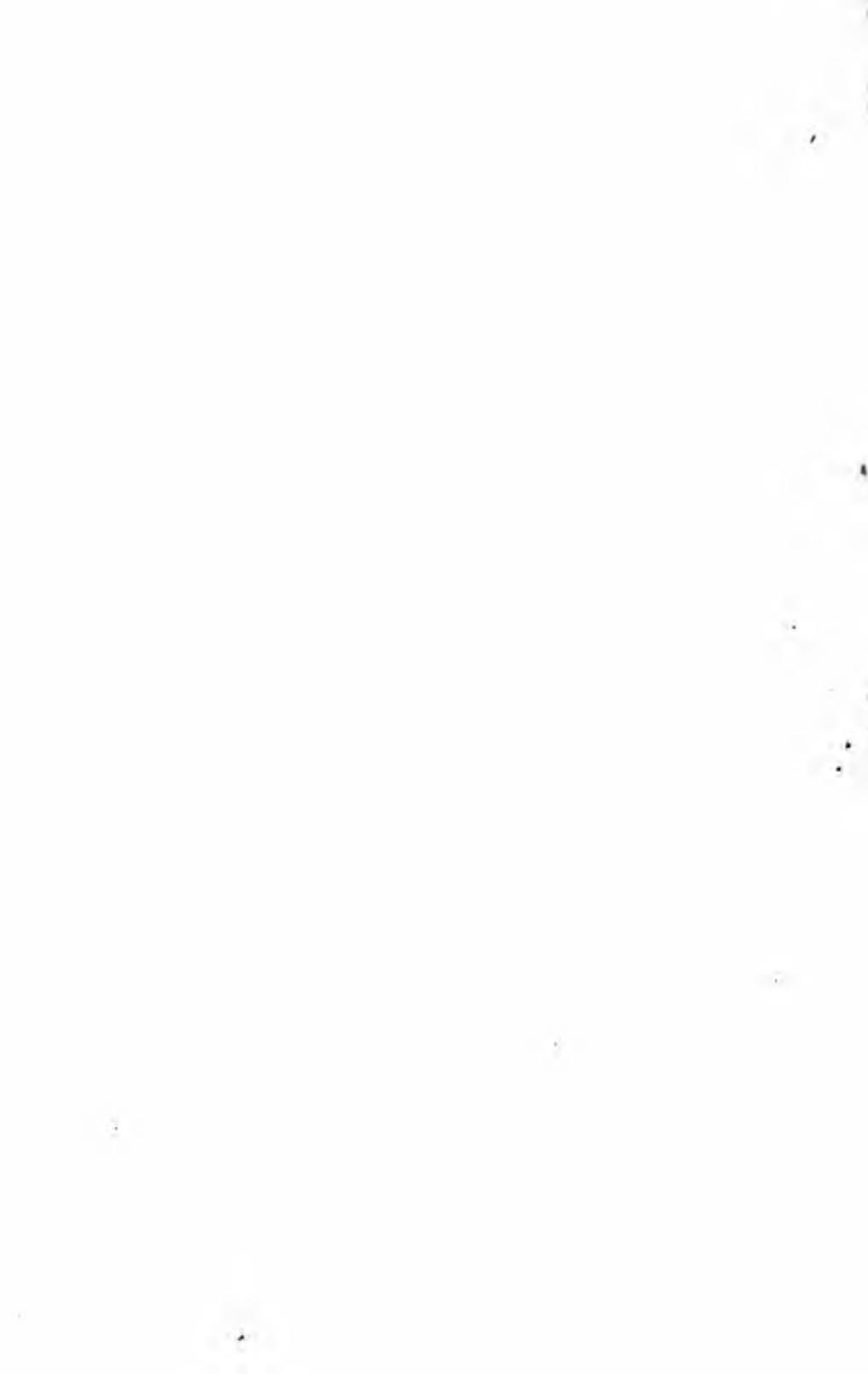
And he thought, "That is all the same to me."

blood." Cried he, " I will do so no more ; no, never ! " There-upon said she to her slave-girl, " O handmaid, open to him the door " ; and she did so, and he fared forth (and he foully bewrayed as to his nether garments) until he had returned to his shop.

BURMA

THE Aladdin story is world famous, and there are a great many variants of it. Some other famous versions include an Italian story called *How Cajusse was Married*, and Grimm used the basis in the story in his *Tale of the Blue Light*, while a Hungarian variant was called *The Wonderful Tobacco Pipe* by Georg von Gaal.¹ The Burmese version, which can be little known, tells of a ring which is possessed of all the propensities of the wonderful lamp.

¹ See Clouston, W. A., *Popular Tales and Fictions: Their Migrations and Transformations*, vol. 1, 1887, pp. 476-482.





ALADDIN'S WONDERFUL LAMP

Burmese (Buddhist) Version

DURING the era of Gaunagóng,¹ a prince, a young noble, a rich man's son, and a poor man's son were being educated together in the country of Tekkatho.² Having learned as much as they wished, they asked their teacher to discourse to them upon the benefits resulting from a good quality to its possessor. Their teacher then related to them the following story :

Soon after the commencement of the world, there dwelt in Gahapti Waytha four very rich men, between whom there existed the warmest friendship, so that each sought only the interest of the others. After a time one of them died, leaving an only son, to whom his mother said, " My dear boy, your father, my husband, is dead, you are therefore now in his place and are entitled to his estate ; but you are still very young ;

¹ The twenty-fifth Buddha.

² " The Páli name of Tekkatho is Tekkathela or Tekkesela, and we know that *kka* corresponds to the Sanskrit *ksha*, so the Sanskrit name is Tekshéla, which is the famous Taxila of Ptolemy, in the time of Alexander the Great ' the largest and wealthiest city between the Indus and the Hydaspes.' "—*Notes on the Ancient History of Burmah*, by the Rev. F. Mason.

go, therefore, to your father's three friends, and learn from them wisdom and prudence." Thus saying, she gave him three hundred pieces of money, and dismissed him.

The youth started on his way to his father's friends, with a retinue of attendants befitting his station. As he was journeying, he met a man with a dog. "Hey, fellow," said he, "will you sell your dog?" The man replied, "If you want to buy him, give me a hundred pieces for him." The youth gave the sum demanded, and sent the dog back to his mother, with an account of what he had done. Supposing that her son had obtained the sanction of her late husband's friends to his purchase, she fed and tended the dog with the greatest care. Another day, after his midday meal, he was walking along when he fell in with a man who had a cat, which he asked him whether he would sell. "You may have her for a hundred pieces," said the man. The lad paid the money and sent the cat to his mother as before, and she, under the same impression as in the previous case, treated the cat with the same attention as she did the dog. Another day he met a man with an ichneumon, which he inquired whether he would part with it. The man said he would, and on being asked the price, demanded a hundred pieces. The rich man's son paid the money, and sent the ichneumon to his mother, who, supposing as before, received and fed it.

Now the dog and the cat, being domestic animals, she kept them in the house without any fear, but the ichneumon, being a wild animal, she was in such dread of it that she wasted away. Her spiritual teacher coming to her house to receive his meal of cooked food, she went down to give it to him, when, on seeing her, he exclaimed, "Why, my disciple, how thin you have grown!" He then recited the eight accidents to which human life is liable.³ The rich man's widow replied, "The only reason is this: having given my son three hundred pieces of money and sent him to his father's three friends to learn how to manage his affairs with prudence, one day he sends me a dog, on another, a cat, and on a third, an ichneumon, for each of which he paid a hundred pieces. Now the dog and the cat are domestic animals, and I am not afraid of them; but the ichneumon is a wild animal, and if I only look at it even, I am so frightened that my body, limbs, and eyes are all wasting

³ These are: (1) Success in one's undertakings; (2) dignity and splendour; (3) honour and fame; (4) happiness; and their four opposites.

away." The priest told her to let the ichneumon loose in the jungle, and it being wrong to disobey the commands of one's teacher or one's parents, she turned it loose, giving it at the same time some food smeared over with oil for its subsistence.

On arriving at the jungle, the ichneumon said to himself, "The rich man's son gave a hundred pieces for me, and since I have been in his possession he has had me well fed and taken care of, and has been the cause of my obtaining life and liberty. I will repay the obligation I am under to my benefactor." Thus meditating, he took up in his mouth a ruby ring which he found in the jungle, and carrying it to the rich man's son, gave it to him saying, "This is no common ring ; it possesses the power of gratifying every wish of its owner. Wear it constantly, therefore, on your finger, and on no account allow anyone else to wear it." The ichneumon then returned to the jungle. And the rich man's son wished, and during the night a palace with a pinnacled roof rose up in front of his house. All the people of the country, from the king downwards, came to see this sight, and the king gave him his daughter in marriage.

Soon afterwards the princess's teacher came to see if he could discover the prince's talisman. He looked, but could see nothing except the ring. Watching his opportunity, on one occasion when the prince had gone out, he entered the palace, and after making flattering speeches to the princess, asked her whether her husband loved her. "How can you ask such a question as that ?" replied she. "He is only a rich man's son, while I am the daughter of the king." "If he loves you so much, you have been, perhaps, allowed to wear his ring ?" insinuated the Bráhman. "If I have not worn it," returned she, "pray who should ?" After this the Bráhman retired. A day or two later, the princess asked her husband to let her wear his ring, and he, being extremely attached to her, took it off and gave it to her, at the same time charging her not to show it to anyone, but to wear it constantly on her finger.

One day, when the rich man's son had gone out, the Bráhman came again, and addressed her with his usual smooth phrases. She said, "I have got the ring you spoke about the other day." "Have you ?" cried he. "Where is it ?" "Here," she replied, displaying it. He begged of her earnestly to take it off and let him examine it ; and at last, on her nurse, who was present, persuading her to yield to her teacher's importunity, she took it off and gave it to him. The instant the Bráhman

received it he changed himself into a crow and flew away to the middle of the ocean, whither no one could follow him, and there dwelt in a pinnacled palace.

When her husband returned, and heard that the Bráhman had taken the ring, he said to her, " You showed the ring, although I particularly charged you not to do so ; and the consequence is that it is now in the midst of the sea, where I can never recover it." After speaking these words, he remained brooding over his loss.

One day a party of the daughters of the Nats⁴ came to bathe in a tank covered with water-lilies, not far from the place where the rich man's son dwelt, and having taken off the necklaces they laid them down on the bank ; there the cat found them, and picking them up, ran away and hid them. The daughters of the Nats came to the cat and begged her to return the necklaces, saying they were only fit for Nats, not for mortals. The cat said, " If I do, you must make a road for me to travel to the place where the Bráhman is living in his palace in the midst of the ocean ; on this condition only will I restore them."⁵ So the daughters of the Nats made the road, and the cat crept stealthily along it until she arrived at the palace, where she found the Bráhman asleep, with the ring on his finger. She then slipped off the ring, brought it back, and delivered it to her master, in return for his kindness, saying, " You paid a great price for me, and have fed and taken care of me ever since." As for the Bráhman, he fell into the sea and was drowned ; while the rich man's son, being once more in possession of the ring, had every wish he formed gratified.

After a time a band of five hundred robbers came to kill the rich man's son and take away his ring. The dog, perceiving that they had come to kill his master, who had purchased him at so high a price and treated him so kindly, flew at the leader of the band and bit him to death, and threw his body down a well. Seeing this the rest of the robbers fled in dismay.

Next morning the dog said to his master, " I had no sleep last night ; I had hard work to do " ; and on being asked to explain, he related how the robbers came to slay his master,

⁴ The inferior celestial regions are inhabited by Nats, beings who occupy the same place in Buddhist belief that fairies, genii (*Jinn*) divs, peris, yakshas, etc., hold in European, Arabian, Persian, and Hindu superstitions.

⁵ Maidens of this order of semi-celestial beings cannot leave the earth, apparently, without their necklaces, like the daughter of the *Jinn*, when their garments are seized by a human being.

and how he had killed their chief, and thereby put the rest to flight, adding, "In return for the many favours you have conferred upon me, I have preserved your life and your property." "Ah," replied the rich man's son, "all men reviled me for giving a hundred pieces for you who are but an animal, but I owe all my prosperity to three animals, each of whom I purchased at that price." Thus saying, he went into the jungle, brought back the ichneumon, and kept him in the house.

Now the ichneumon, the dog, and the cat each asserted it had a right to eat before the others. The ichneumon, because he was the first to give the ring to their master. The cat, because, when the gift which the ichneumon had made to their master had fallen into the hands of the Brâhman, she, by taking the necklaces of the daughters of the Nats, and by means of the road which they made for her, had recovered the ring, and was thus the cause of their master's happiness. The dog, because, when five hundred robbers came to strip the rich man's son of what the others had given him and to take his life, he killed their chief, and cast him into the water, whereupon the rest of the band fled. "And thus," said the dog, "I am the preserver not only of our master's wealth, but of his life also."

Thus disputing, they agreed to submit their cases to the decision of the Princess Thoo-dhamma Tsari, the daughter of King Dhammarit, who dwelt at Madarit, in the kingdom of Kambautsa, in a pavilion with one pillar in the centre,⁶ who possessed a perfect acquaintance with the ten laws,⁷ and was deeply versed in the civil and criminal codes, the fame of whose wisdom had spread to the eight quarters of the world,⁸ so that the illustrious of every nation came to her for judgment.

The three animals having appeared before the princess, the ichneumon opened the case : "A rich man's son paid a hundred

⁶ Pavilions of this form are only allowed to certain females of the Burmese royal family.

⁷ These are : (1) To make religious offerings ; (2) to observe the Five Precepts ; (3) to be charitable ; (4) to be upright ; (5) to be mild and gentle ; (6) not to give way to anger ; (7) to be strict in the performance of all religious ceremonies ; (8) not to oppress ; (9) to exercise self-restraint ; (10) not to be familiar with inferiors. The Five Precepts of Buddha referred to in the second of these ten laws are : (1) not to do murder ; (2) not to steal ; (3) not to commit adultery ; (4) not to drink intoxicating liquors ; (5) not to do anything evil.

⁸ The four cardinal points, and North-East, North-West, South-East, and South-West are called the "eight faces" or quarters of the world.

pieces of money for me, fed and tended me well, and gave me my liberty in the jungle. Bearing this in mind, and because he was my benefactor, I gave him a ruby ring, by means of which he obtained a pinnacled palace which sprang up out of the earth ; therefore I am entitled to take precedence of, and eat before, the dog and the cat." The cat, in turn related how that when the Brâhman had gained possession of the ring which the ichneumon had given their master, she recovered it, and so was the cause of his present good fortune. After her, the dog stated his case, saying, " When robbers came to take from our master the ring which the ichneumon had given him, and which, when lost, was restored to him by the cat, I killed their chief, and the remainder of the band fled. Thus I preserved not only my master's wealth but his life also, and therefore I ought to have precedence over the two others."

When they had ended, Princess Thoo-dhamma Tsari thus pronounced her decision : " The dog, in addition to saving his master's treasures, also prolonged his life ; therefore he is entitled to the first place among you ; but verily among animals there are none who understand how to repay a debt of gratitude as you do."

Thus ends the story of the dog, the cat and the ichneumon, from which you may learn that although man is superior to animals, yet kindness towards them does not go unrequited.

CAMBODIA

CAMBODIA is one of the four states that make up present-day Indo-China.¹ The whole country constitutes a variety of races—Chinese, Malayan, Indonesian among others—whose only resemblance, geographically, in Europe is to the Balkan countries. From the literary point of view the main thread is the folk-lore story, of which “The Story of a Man with a Knife” is one of the best examples. Its humour, its naïvety, its belief in magic, and its power of wonderment are typical of this land of temples, superstition and mixed races. The origins of this story are as lost as the majority of folk stories. The story included here first appeared in France in 1900 in an indifferent translation by the Abbé Guesdon; this, the first English version, which has been translated from a new French translation made by François Martini and Solange Bernard.²

¹ Cochin-China, Viet-Nam, and Laos being the other three.

² Paris 1946.





THE STORY OF THE MAN WITH A KNIFE

ONCE upon a time there were two young boys, a younger and an older brother. Their parents died suddenly and they were left alone in the world. That is why they were urged to go and learn to read and write in the Pagoda, and be instructed in religion and the *pâli* texts.¹ The two young brothers went to the greatest of the Buddhist priests, who was overcome by compassion at the sight of them and undertook their education. The two boys were soon so adept at their studies that no other boy could surpass them.

When they had finished their studies, the priest made them take holy orders as novices. The two young priests were far from lazy; they applied themselves to studying the sacred texts in order to please their master and so not cause him any trouble. They remained in the religious order for five rainy seasons, after which they felt a desire to return to the ordinary world. The two novices therefore went to their

¹ In the old days little Cambodians went to learn to read and write in the Pagodas. These Pagoda schools still exist. *Pâli* is the sacred language of Cambodgian Buddhism.

nothing but a pair of trousers that reach half way down his knees and no farther, with holes in the back and front ! My master's brother would most certainly be better dressed than that ! " The porter went off after telling our man that the mandarin was away attending the King's court.

The porter found the lady and said : " Oh, lady of my Lord ! A miserable creature has arrived from Cambodia. He is very sordidly dressed in an old pair of trousers which only come half way down his legs. You can see at a glance that they are torn to shreds ; and there are holes in them back and front. Moreover, he dares to pretend that he is the youngest brother of the Lord, my master, and that he had the same father and mother. I've made him wait at the door."

The mandarin's wife flew into a rage. " What," she said, " a miserable wretch who defames my husband's glory ! Who does he think he is ? "

Extremely irritated, the lady ordered the guardian to seize the man and to throw him into prison in chains.

" Wait until my husband returns and we'll have him executed," she said.

As soon as our man was put into chains he started to moan : " Ah, alack is me ! I wanted to leave the Khmer country and come to China to visit my elder brother. But he no longer feels any compassion for his little brother, born of the same parents, because he is rich ! His wealth has made him over-proud ! I have been seized and put into chains ! He will even put me to death ! Ah, unhappy me ! If only I had remained in Cambodia I could have earned my living like the ragamuffin that I am, but . . . "

Now our man did not know that his elder brother had gone to pay homage to the King ; and when the mandarin returned home his wife told him what had happened.

" Lord," she said, " there's a wretch here who has come from Cambodia and claims to be your brother, of the same parents. But his appearance is very sordid. His trousers only come down to his knees and they have holes in back and front. At the moment he is in prison in chains. I waited for you to come back before I put him to death."

At these words the mandarin shouted : " Go and fetch him then—for fear that he might really be my brother."

He gave orders to unfetter the prisoner and to bring him before him. Well, he saw at once that the man really was his

younger brother. And he ordered food to be prepared. And he saw his brother's distress by the state of his clothes.

He gave him a pair of trousers, then he started questioning him. "Oh, young brother," he said, "how comes it that you're so unhappy in your country? What job do you do?"

"I have no way of earning my living, and I sank into great poverty. I have a wife who does not have a job either."

At these words the mandarin was so filled with compassion that he could not speak for a while.

"Little brother," he said at length, "how on earth did you get here?"

"I came on a junk. The captain allowed me on board."

"And when does your boat go back?" the mandarin asked.

"In three days," replied his young brother.

At these words the mandarin left him without a word. He ordered a meal to be served and invited his brother to join him.

When the meal was finished, he said: "Little brother, live here and amuse yourself. I'm going to talk to the soothsayer."

The mandarin went to the soothsayer. Observing his approach, the soothsayer prepared tea, a pipe of tobacco and a sofa.

When he arrived the dignitary said: "Soothsayer . . . I want to learn something about my younger brother's future. Is he destined to be unhappy all his life, as he has been up to now, or will he be happier in the future?"

The soothsayer pulled out a book of tables and studied it attentively; then he made a prediction: "Lord, your young brother will not always be poor; in seven years' time he will be a king and will rule over two cities. You yourself will have much to do with the high councils of state, thanks to him. For the moment your brother is going through a bad time; however, a time will come when, on returning to his country, he will find a treasure in his path of such price that it will give him two kingdoms; but as he continues his journey he will lose his treasure. But on the day appointed by his *karma*² he will be able to enjoy his royal power and his *merits*³ will be recognised."

Thus instructed on his younger brother's future, the great minister thanked the soothsayer and went home.

² Karma : is the sum or total of good deeds which, according to the theory of the transmigration of souls, determines each one's condition in the next life.

³ Merits, in this case means good deeds.

Three days later, when the junk was ready to leave our man said to his older brother : " Brother—the time has come to say good-bye—the junk leaves to-day."

The mandarin took a piece of unbleached cloth and tore a piece off which he gave his brother.

The latter took his present, said good-bye, and left the house.

He walked down to the harbour deep in thought and his heart was heavy. He had nearly refused the bit of cloth ; he felt deceived and moaned : " Ah, we were only two brothers without a father or a mother ; their deaths orphaned us. When we were poor we knew how to love and esteem one another ; but now that my brother is rich, we are no longer the same. He has a rich man's pride, and I don't count any more. He is hoarding his gold and silver, and won't give me a single coin, out of charity. He only gave me a bit of nasty cloth ! "

When the poor boy boarded the junk, the captain gave the order to set sail. No sooner had they got underway than the captain began to ask questions.

" Well, brother. Did you see the mandarin ? Did he give you anything ? "

" Nothing," our man replied, " nothing at all except a piece of unbleached cloth and a pair of trousers."

With this information the captain of the junk turned his back without a word.

When the junk reached the high seas, during the night it was so dark that they could go no farther, so they dropped anchor and settled down to sleep.

Because his *karma* was about to bear fruit our man remembered one of the priest's rules :

" However tired you are, don't sleep."

" Every man on board," he told himself, " is asleep. So I mustn't sleep myself."

He remained propped up against the mast, not daring to close his eyes. At midnight he saw a fabulous ogre flying over the junk looking down at them.

When he bent his head, to see better, his beard lightly grazed our man, who gave a leap, and seized hold of it.

" Horrible being," he cried, " I'm going to kill you instantly ! "

The ogre trembled with fright. He tried to escape but he

couldn't, because our man held on to him firmly by his beard. He was very afraid of death and said to the man : " If you take pity on me and let me go I will give you a noose capable of strangling of its own accord, a stick which beats by itself. If an enemy attacks you all you have to do is to order the noose to start strangling, and the stick to beat by itself, and the enemy will be conquered. And I will give you a pot that cooks food by itself so that if you are hungry all you have to say is : ' Pot, cook—I want to eat.' And it will cook the food for you without you having to do anything."

When the ogre finished speaking the man replied : " If that's true, ogre, give me the things and I'll let you go."

The ogre gave him the objects and the ogre flew away to his own country.

The man told the captain at daybreak : " Captain," he said, " an ogre came to devour us last night. If I hadn't been there he would have eaten everybody. If you don't believe me, Captain, look at what the ogre gave me to be free . . . a noose that strangles of its own accord, a stick that beats by itself, and a pot that cooks without human help."

When the captain heard this he asked : " Where are these marvellous things, little brother ? Show them to me ! "

The man, who had no thought of ulterior motives, went and fetched the ogre's presents and brought them to the captain.

When he looked at them, the captain thought : " Yes, these things are of great value ; even kings do not possess them. What kind of extraordinary star has this man been born under that he get hold of such objects ? " And he told himself : " This boy strikes me as rather stupid. I'll fool him and make him put the things into my safe-keeping. Then, when we come across an island I'll get him to land, alone, and we'll leave without him. I'll keep the precious objects."

Then he said to the man : " Little brother . . . let me look after these things for you. You have no safe in your quarters."

Our good man thought the captain was sincere when he offered to look after them for him, and put them into his keeping.

He did not suspect that the man had ulterior motives. So he gave his precious objects to the captain. When the latter took them he gave orders for the junk to continue its journey.

They were due to pass an island with a fig-tree growing out of the water⁴ and when they arrived the captain ordered the anchor to be dropped. He turned to our man and said : " Little brother, would you go and collect those figs for me ? "

The brave boy only understood that the captain wanted him to fetch the figs. He certainly did not suspect that the junk would leave without him as soon as he was up the tree.

" Look, little brother," the captain said again, " climb that high branch and get me that beautiful cluster of fruit I can see on the very top."

Our man climbed the high branch. The captain ordered the junk to leave and abandoned the man.

The unhappy wretch shouted loudly for it to come and pick him up and when it did not take any notice he moaned :

" Ah, unhappy me ! I was duped into climbing this tree ! The boat has gone and they have abandoned me ! They wanted to go off with my precious objects ! And they have left me to die in the middle of the sea ! How can I possibly live here ? I haven't got the pot which cooks by itself. Ah, how I wish a junk would come and pick me up and take me far away from here. I have nothing to eat, now, and no money. I shall certainly die."

Our man was overcome by self-pity and cried bitterly.

Now a wild boar was in the habit of coming to the island every night to eat the figs which had dropped to the ground. By virtue of a precious stone in the middle of his head, this wild boar was able to walk on the water.

Accordingly, when night fell, the wild boar came across the water holding the precious stone between his teeth.

The man saw him coming from far away and watched him trot up to the fig-tree carrying the jewel in his mouth. Reaching the tree, the boar had to drop the precious stone on the ground in order to eat the figs.

Having observed this, the man collected as many figs as possible and threw them as far as he could so that the boar had to run and fetch them ; for our man had realised the magic properties of the precious stone. Then, by virtue of his *merits*, which were about to bear fruit, the wild boar ran after the figs ; whereupon the man slithered to the ground and seized the jewel. Then he ran across the water. He pressed on all night and when day dawned he saw the junk.

⁴ This is an Indian fig-tree, " *Ficus Indica*."

"Hey, Captain—wait for me!"

When the captain heard the shout he turned round and ordered the sails to be lowered and the anchor to be dropped.

As soon as he had climbed on board, the man said to the captain : "O Captain ! It was a dreadful thing to think of abandoning me to die in the middle of the ocean ! But I was born under a lucky star. If I hadn't been I should have met a stupid and lonely death."

The captain tried to make excuses : "Oh ! Little brother. I thought you had boarded the junk for'head. I had no intention of abandoning you."

After a while he added : "But tell me, little brother, what on earth enabled you to walk across the water ?"

"I relieved a wild boar of its magic stone which enabled it to walk on water."

Then the captain, who conveniently forgot his bad actions, said : "Put that jewel into my safe-keeping : I'll look after it for you."

But our man thought : "This man is trying to dupe me a second time." So he replied : "Captain, first of all, bring me the other objects. I want to make them into a parcel, then I will give them to you. They aren't much use to me at the moment. I will give them to you to look after."

The captain thought : "This poor boy is really stupid ! I'd much better have all his objects."

He went and fetched the strangling noose, the magic stick and the magic pot, as well as the piece of unbleached cloth, and the pair of trousers, and gave them all to the man.

After having made them into a parcel, the man turned his back on the captain and walked rapidly across the water.

At this the captain felt so upset that he could not say a word.

The man walked as quickly as possible. And thanks to the magic properties of the precious stone he completed a journey of seven nights in one day. He was home by evening.

He shouted to his wife : "Hey, wife !" he shouted, "open the door, I have come back !"

Now this bad wife, who had made a cuckold of her husband, was in bed in the arms of her lover. When she heard her husband shouting, she played for time.

"Who's calling ? My husband is not at home—useless to call him."

Hearing his wife's words he thought that she was a faithful woman.

"It's me," he said, "it's me, wife!"

"What?" the wife replied, "is it really you? I thought it was a bad joke!"

Then she added: "Wait a second and I'll light the lamp." And she helped her lover to escape.

As for the husband, he had dug a hole in the soil at the foot of the ladder,⁵ and buried the pot, the jewel, the stick and the noose. When the lover had gone, his wife came down and welcomed her husband. She gave him something to eat when he climbed up into the house. Then he went to bed. His wife asked questions.

"Have you brought anything back from China, husband?"

"Almost nothing," he replied. "My brother only gave me a pair of trousers and a bit of unbleached cloth."

The woman pretended to cry and shouted: "It's not true! You're lying! Has one ever met anyone who, having gone to see a rich brother, returns with only a bit of stuff and a pair of trousers?"

At that moment the man remembered his master's advice: "Once in bed, don't speak to your wife."

So he said: "Enough, wife. We'll talk to-morrow."

Now the wife's lover was listening under the house.

Meanwhile the wife persisted. Her husband, thinking that his wife was devoted to him, nearly told her about his objects; but he remembered his master's advice and hardened his heart.

However, as his wife still persisted in questioning him, he forgot the priest's advice through tenderness, and confided: "I have nothing except a magic precious stone which I took from a wild boar, a noose that can strangle of its own accord, a stick which beats by itself and a pot that cooks by itself. I have nothing else."

His wife wanted to know more. As the night was silent and deserted, and not realising that his wife's lover was under the house, he said: "I have buried the objects at the foot of the ladder."

And she, knowing where her lover was, cried loudly so that he would hear her: "Hey, what! When we possess the magic stone of the wild boar, a noose which strangles by itself, a stick that beats of its own accord, a pot that cooks by

⁵ Cambodian houses are built on raised platforms above the soil.

itself, why bury them at the foot of the ladder in front of the house ? ”

The lover immediately found the treasure and ran away as fast as he could.

Our man and his wife went to sleep.

The next day at dawn the man climbed down the ladder to fetch his objects.

They had disappeared.

Somebody had dug them up and stolen the lot. There was nothing but an empty hole.

The man was speechless. But he thought : “ My wife has a lover ! ”

So he made a pillory and fastened it to the ladder. Then, attaching a cord to it, he dragged it before the judge.

Having heard the charge, the judge hit the ladder and asked : “ You, ladder, who received the objects put into your care by this man, how did you come to let them be stolen ? ”

The judge was a man without intelligence, incapable of taking the affair seriously.

After laughing a good deal the judge said to our man : “ You’re mad, my boy. Who has ever sued a ladder ? Go and find somebody else to give judgment in your affair.”

And the man tied the rope to the ladder once more and dragged it to the Royal Palace.

The king came out of his audience chamber and he saw our man. He ordered an officer to call the man who was dragging a ladder around with a pillory attached.

The officer ran off and shouted at the man to approach.

When he was brought before him, the king questioned him thus : “ Tell me, what are you trying to do ? Why are you dragging a ladder about with a pillory attached ? ”

The man prostrated himself and replied : “ Sire, I implore your mercy ! In the past I possessed precious objects. I dug a hole in the ground, and I buried them at the foot of the ladder you see here. I gave them to him to guard for me. The ladder allowed somebody to steal them. That’s why I am making a charge against it.”

“ And what were these precious objects ? ” the king asked.

“ A noose which strangles of its own accord,” the man replied ; “ a stick that knocks by itself ; a pot that cooks without outside help ; and the jewel of a wild boar which gives him the power to walk on the water.”

Thus informed, the king ordered the man to give up his ladder, which he put into the keeping of an officer. Because of his high intelligence the king had understood the affair. He said to the plaintiff: "Good man, your wife has a lover. Stay near at hand."

Then he had some money given him and a coat to make him decent. Our man remained in the king's service for about three days.

At the end of this period, the king gave him clothing and sumptuous things and advised him in this way: "If, when you go home with the money I have given you, you are invited to a dancing display, you must not go; but you will give your money and the clothing to your wife so that she will be invited to the ballet."

After this injunction the man prostrated himself and asked permission to leave. Then he went back home.

When his wife saw him return with such a magnificent collection of things, she pretended to love the good man very deeply. The next day the king sounded the gong which summoned all his people to attend the dance to be given by his majesty to all his subjects without exception.

The public flocked to see the ballet and the crowd was enormous. Our man's wife asked: "Are you going to the fête with everyone else?"

"Woman," the man replied, "you go to it. Take this money I have brought back and go and see the dances with the rest of the people."

Understanding that her husband was giving her the money so that she could go to the dances, she was overjoyed. But she immediately thought of taking the money to her lover as there was no danger of her meeting her husband at the celebration.

The woman took the money in great haste and rushed off to join her lover. Then she gave the money to her pimp of a friend.

When they had dressed they both went to the palace. And as soon as they were inside they remained standing, admiring the sight.

Now the king had given orders to a guard to watch the crowd carefully to see whether he could see anybody dressed in the clothes that the king had given our good man with the ladder. The palace guard inspected the crowd and discovered

the individual and the woman standing side by side admiring the crowd.

The guard summoned them and took them to the king.

The king saw that the man was not the man to whom he had given the gift of clothing and money. So he sent for the man with the ladder and demanded : " Where is your wife ? "

" My wife, Sire, is the woman you see here," the good man replied.

The king continued : " And the man who is with her, do you know him ? "

The husband prostrated himself and replied that he did not know him.

So the king had an old suit brought to replace the clothes he was wearing. Then he questioned him. " Where did you get these things ? "

The man trembled with fear, prostrated himself on the ground, and replied : " This woman gave them to me to wear."

" Evil man," the king replied, " have you stolen this man's wife ? "

" Yes, Sire," said the good-for-nothing.

The king asked him yet another question. " And it is also you, is it not, who stole the precious objects this man buried at the foot of his ladder ? "

" It's me," the thief confessed.

So the king gave orders that the objects were to be brought to him. And when they were brought, the king addressed the husband. " Are these your objects ? "

" Yes, Sire, they are mine," said the man with the ladder.

And the king asked : " What punishment would you inflict on this man and woman ? "

" I can ask for no greater punishment," the man replied, " than that they should be married to one another."

The king and his ministers appreciated the husband's whim and did not insist upon punishment.

When the man received his objects he made a gift of them to the king. Then he said, prostrating himself : " Sire, deign to consider this noose and this stick. If your enemies follow you, order the noose to strangle them, and the stick to beat them ; and your enemies will be vanquished in a moment. And no matter what food you like, just order this cooking pot, ' Cook, oh, pot,' and it will cook what you like. Finally, thanks to the wild boar's jewel you will be able to walk on water."

The king thought : " These objects are without doubt of inestimable value. I have no wealth that could possibly buy them ! My own person, the queen, the princess, all the treasures of the realm cannot compare with the objects this man has given me ! " And he said : " I have nothing to give you in exchange that is as precious as your present. I only have my daughter and my kingdom. I will give them to you in return for your incomparable presents."

But the man replied : " I implore your grace, I am only a poor man and I do not aspire to a kingdom nor to your princess. August one, I am but the dust on your shoes ! If I am worthy of your kindness, would you just give me a basket-maker's knife."

When he heard the man's wish, the king ordered a tradesman to forge a basket-maker's knife. The knife could cut a pile of seven planks piled on top of one another. The king had it put into a sheath and gave it to the man.

The latter paid homage to the king, asked permission to leave, and returned home.

The court and all the people said : " That man is born under a bad star. The king offered him his daughter and a kingdom and he refused to accept them ! He was content with a knife ! "

This is why they called him Sire Knife.

The man with a knife went on his way and appeared in another kingdom governed by another king. There he asked a rich merchant for hospitality. This opulent man had a daughter, but no sons. And seeing this young man coming to ask him for shelter in this way, he was overcome by pity, allowed him to stay, and treated him like a son.

The man with a knife started to watch the servants in the house of his rich benefactor whom he now called 'father.' And he did his best to see that his master was spared every trouble.

For his part, the rich man began to feel a strong affection for the man, and it could not have been stronger if he had been his son.

Now it happened that the king of this country decided to put his dignitaries to the test before choosing a wise mandarin, capable of protecting his realm and governing well.

So the king had a sofa, covered in silk mattresses, installed in the audience hall of his palace, and laid carpets of wool.

Moreover a succulent meal was prepared and placed in the hall.

Every mandarin had to take turns in dining there and guarding the palace.

One after the other the mandarins dined there and lay on the sofa. But while they slept the king crept in furtively and looked at them, and seeing that they slept soundly, he ordered them to be removed and beheaded.

In this way, every mandarin who came to guard the palace had his head cut off.

The king thus tested all his mandarins and caused a massacre. At length the rich man's turn came round. He ordered his wife to ceremoniously make all preparation for his funeral and thought : "Now it's my turn to go and sleep at the palace—and no one has left it alive!"

So the whole family, wife, children, brothers and sisters, near and remote relations, customers and servants, all cried and showed their misery. The rich man went to bed and refused all food.

Hearing these lamentations, and being told that his adopted father had gone to bed and refused all food, Sire Knife, went to him and asked : "Father, why all this terrible mourning? And why are you prostrated on your bed? Tell me, oh, Father, so that I should know too!"

At these words the rich man replied : "Oh, son of mine, since the day I adopted you, I have had no trouble from you. That's why I've been thinking : 'He will live here and guard the house, and he will take my place.' Now, I shall not escape death to-night because the king has ordered me to go and sleep at the palace and guard it. And every mandarin who has spent a night there has perished without appeal. When you have no father any longer, stay in the house and protect your mother and your sister."

When he heard this *the man with a knife* said respectfully : "Father, get up and eat, and don't be afraid when your turn comes to sleep at the palace. Confide in me. Let me go to the palace and perish in your place."

But the rich man then said : "Enough's said, my son! You are still young, whereas I am an old man, ready to die."

"Father," Sire Knife replied, "the reason why the others lost their lives in the palace was because they lacked spirit. If they had been better advised they would not have lost their

lives. All those dignitaries met their deaths because they weren't particularly clever. I know the king's ruse."

At these words the old man got up, ate and washed.

When evening came the young man took his basket-maker's knife and went to the king's palace. There the servants gave him all the things needed by the mandarin of the guard.

As soon as he was alone he began to think. "This king," he thought, "wants to choose a dignitary of the élite who will be capable of watching over his kingdom. And this is the test he has thought up."

For this reason the man did not lie down on the sofa, but sat in a chair a little distance away.

Late that night when silence and solitude reigned in the palace, the king left his apartments and appeared in another guise.

The man with a knife saw him and realised that it was the king in disguise, so he remained quiet and hid behind a pillar.

When the king approached the table he saw that the food had not been eaten. At that moment Sire Knife started shouting: "Kill the thief who has come to steal from the king!"

The king trembled with fear and wanted to flee. *The man with a knife* went in pursuit.

Slipping away, the king found refuge behind a pillar in the hall. The man tapped his knife: "Pan, pan!" against each pillar in case the king was hiding behind it.

The king hid behind each pillar in succession, and Sire Knife followed him, tapping the pillars one after the other, taking care not to find the king. Soon every pillar was riddled and the king shouted, "It's me!"

At these words the young man stopped hitting the pillars. So the king was able to return to his apartments.

Our man went back to his seat. When day dawned he returned home.

At that moment a wind arose and blew with a terrible violence. And after the man had regained his house, this tornado blew through the whole throne-room and destroyed the pillars which had been riddled by the basket-maker's knife. The king wanted to know who had passed the preceding night in the palace.

When they told him that it had been the rich man's turn, the king sent one of his ministers to fetch him with all speed.

Reaching the rich man's house, the mandarin called him and said : "Sire, the king has commanded me to take you to him in all haste."

So the rich man followed the royal official.

Meanwhile *the man with a knife* slept, and did not know that his father had been convoked by the king.

On the road, while the rich man walked beside him, the minister asked him a question :

"And it was you, Sire, who slept at the palace the previous night ?"

"It was my son, Excellence," the rich man replied.

The minister went on : "An enemy destroyed the pillars in the throne-room. They fell down in one go. That's why the king has given orders for you to be brought to him."

At these words the rich man was seized by fear and thought : "Oh, son of mine ! You yourself offered to go and sleep at the palace in the place of your father, thinking that you would be better than he ; but an enemy has cut down the pillars in the throne-room so that the hall collapsed !"

Tortured by anguish, the rich man was filled with fears of his own death. And his fear was not lessened when he arrived at the palace and saw the throne-room flat on the ground.

The minister took him to the king who questioned him : "Sire, rich man, you were on guard at the palace yesterday night ?"

"Sire, it was my turn."

"And who slept here to guard the palace ?"

"Sire, my son passed the night here to guard the palace."

"Sire, rich man—since when have you had a son ? I thought you only had a daughter."

The rich man replied : "I ask mercy, oh, king ! My son is an orphan whom no one knows. When I heard he was alone in the world, I adopted him as my son, because I didn't have one."

The king replied : "If that's the case, bring this young man to me."

A palace official rushed off in haste to find *the man with a knife*. The rich man's fears increased. He began to sigh.

"Oh, son of mine, you're going to die with your father, to-day, and without appeal !"

Meanwhile the minister ran to fetch the young man. When

he reached the rich man's house, he addressed the rich man's wife thus : " Madame, the king has sent for your son."

" Excellence," the lady replied, " he is still asleep. Last night he was on guard at the palace and he did not sleep at all."

But the minister said : " Even if he needs sleep, madam, he must be awakened, as the king has ordered him to appear before him as quickly as possible."

Filled with compassion for her adopted son, the rich man's wife did not have enough courage to drag him from his sleep, so she sent her daughter.

But the young lady cried out : " Oh, no, Maman, I haven't enough courage. He has only just gone to sleep ! "

The noise they made woke up Sire Knife, who left his room. Seeing him up his mother said : " My son, the king has sent for you. There's a palace official waiting."

So the young man washed his face, passed a comb through his hair, looked at himself in a mirror, put on his best clothes, then he followed the king's man.

When they arrived the king asked the rich man : " Well, Sire, rich man, is this your son ? "

" It is my son, your majesty," replied the rich man.

So the king addressed *the man with a knife*. " So it was you who guarded the palace the night before ? "

And Sire Knife prostrated himself and replied : " It was I, Sire, who wanted to pass the night at the palace in place of my father."

Thus informed the king turned to the rich man. " Sire," he said, " I am not at all angry because my audience chamber is flat on the ground. I can build another. But what I have been unable to find was a man like your son. There is someone you could call a man ! "

Then the king turned to *the man with a knife*. " What's your name, my boy ? "

" Sire," replied the young man, " I am called Sire Knife."

" Well, Sire Knife," said the king, " the previous night, when you followed me with the intention of killing me, with what did you hit my pillars ? "

" Sire, I hit them with my basket-maker's knife."

Then the king said : " Young man, bring me that knife ; I want to see it ; for it is with that you destroyed my pillars."

The man with the knife replied : " I ask your mercy. If you wish to see how my knife cuts, order a pile of seven planks

one on top of another to be brought. I will show you how they can be cut in one go by my knife."

Amazed, the king ordered a pile of wood to be brought. Then he commanded the young man to draw his knife.

So the young man took hold of his knife and passed it through the seven planks.

After this gesture the king demanded: "Are the planks cut?"

"They are," replied *the man with a knife*.

"But if they are cut how comes it that there is no trace of a cut?"

"Oh, compassionate king," said *the man with a knife*, "if you don't believe me, then order someone to pull one end of the pile and you will see whether they are cut or not."

The king ordered a minister to pull the planks at one end. One half came away. Seeing this, the king was filled with fear. He thought: "If through bad luck last night this man had reached me with his knife, he would have killed me. I would have died a useless death. And no one would have been there to help me. There is no doubt that I must possess some merits because I am still alive."

Having understood what had happened, the monarch turned to the rich man and said: "Sire, your son has the qualities necessary to watch over my kingdom. I appoint him mandarin in charge of my safety.

"Among all the mandarins I have killed in large numbers, there was not one who was capable of watching over my kingdom and myself. Each one who came to my throne room fell asleep! They dared to eat the food I had prepared. And they dared to sleep on the sofa! No doubt they would even have slept with my wife and daughter!"

After this speech, the king gave the rich man the following order: "Sire, you must give your daughter in marriage to this young *man with a knife*."

The rich man and his adopted son bowed in homage to the king, and asking his permission to leave, they returned home.

The rich man constructed a pavilion for the nuptials and assembled the fiancé's presents. Then he prepared for the splendid ceremony which would take place on the day that *the man with a knife* married his daughter.

All the great dignitaries, mandarins of every class, high functionaries, notables, were invited with the family, as well as their wives.

When the appointed day arrived, the ceremony took place with solemnity. They joined the wrists of the young man and the young woman together⁶ as a sign of a happy union.

Thus *the man with a knife* and the rich man's daughter became man and wife in joy and great happiness.

But when they were married Sire Knife did not allow himself to be idle. He went to the court every morning to be of service to the king.

One day the king, who was getting older and older, began to think: "Here I am used up by old age. I have no son and only one daughter; what will happen to my throne when I die as I have no son to reign after me? But there is *the man with a knife* who is filled with wisdom and intelligence. He knows how to behave. I will marry him to my daughter so that when he succeeds to the throne he will protect my subjects."

Such were the king's private thoughts. Then he ordered a pavilion to be built to celebrate the nuptials and ordered his astrologer to calculate the most propitious day on which to celebrate the union of the royal princess and *the man with a knife*. When the stars were in the right conjunction, the king ordered the rich man to bring *the man with a knife*. The wedding was celebrated with great magnificence.

After the marriage, the coronation of *the man with a knife* took place.

Once he was made king, he governed and protected the people in such a way that his reign was one of happiness and prosperity for all his subjects.

He had the rich man's daughter brought to the palace to live with him.

As for the rich man, *the king with a knife* promoted him to the rank of first minister who decided public affairs. He put him in charge of protecting the realm. The rich man became the king's eyes.

Then the old king, and the queen mother, who had reached a great age, died. *The king with a knife* built a splendid crematorium. And the bodies of these august personages were taken there with elaborate ritual. A pyramid was built to receive the royal reliques.

After these pious tasks *the king with a knife* lived in great happiness, exempt from all worries or illnesses.

⁶ A Cambodian custom.

One day *the king with a knife* felt a desire to go and visit the sovereign who had made him a present of the basket-maker's knife.

He ordered his officers to assemble the escort and prepare the royal mounts—superb elephants, and strings of horses chosen from the most noble beasts.

When his orders were obeyed, and his ministers were informed, *the king with a knife* charged the first minister to watch over the palace and the two queens.

After that the king mounted his royal elephant and began his journey. At the end of three months he reached the kingdom of the other monarch.

He sent a messenger ahead to say that *the king with a knife* was about to pay him a visit and pay his respects. The envoy had to inform the king that *the king with a knife* was the man who in the past had presented the monarch with the noose that strangled of its own accord; the stick which beat by itself; the pot that cooked by itself; and of the precious stone from the wild boar which allowed the holder to walk on the water. Now, thanks to the knife, this young man owned a kingdom, was a king, and he wanted to salute his benefactor and pay homage.

Having received these instructions from *the king with a knife*, the officer prostrated himself and left.

Appearing before the other king, the envoy gave his message. Thus informed, the king ordered preparations for his reception.

On his return the messenger told *the king with a knife*: "Sire, the sovereign prince of this realm is waiting for you impatiently; for he has a very good memory."

The other prince suffered a good deal when he saw *the king with a knife*, for he had changed so much. He left his throne to welcome him. Then he took his hand and made him ascend the throne with him. After that a feast was given to the troops and the dignitaries. Everyone ate and drank their fill.

Then the friendly king began to think: "I am very old now, and I have no son to whom to leave my kingdom. Now this *man with a knife* has much merit, and he now has royal power. He has become a king. Because of this, I shall give him my daughter; I don't know anyone better to marry her."

Having made his decision, the king ordered preparations to be made for the ceremony. And he ordered a coronation for

the king with a knife. He convoked all the dignitaries and built a wonderful nuptial pavilion. When the stars were in the right conjunction, the king's chaplain celebrated the marriage of *the king with a knife* and the princess.

When it was over, the old king took the noose, and the magic stick, the miraculous pot, and the wild boar's gem, and gave them to his successor as a present.

Having in this way become king of two realms simultaneously, *the king with a knife* thought of his brother in China. He sent a messenger to fetch him ; he wanted to make him his first minister with supreme powers over the new realm.

Then *the king with a knife* took leave of his august parents-in-law, recommended his elder brother to watch over the new kingdom and to live in the royal palace.

With his affairs in order, *the king with a knife* returned to his first capital.

Afterwards he fell into the habit of travelling backwards and forwards between his two kingdoms. He protected each of his subjects, great or small. And he knew happiness and prosperity all through his double reign.

CEYLON

THERE is a considerable Sinhalese literature apart from Indian stories and fables. A very significant collection was published by H. Parker in his *Folk-Tales of Ceylon* (3 vols., 1910). Handed down and related by Sinhalese villagers, they constitute a remarkable variety of stories, ranging as they do from those of the Tom-tom Beaters of the lower castes to those of the very highest caste. It is to be regretted that only one example can be included when there is such a considerable collection of varying tales from which to choose. The tale printed here is an amusing variant of the "Thief Stories."¹ In this instance it is probably one told by the Washermen (radawā or Hēnayā or Hēnawalayā), who were persons of power, for they were the arbiters regarding cases of violation of social etiquette or custom. Washermen were paid for their services by produce of varying kinds such as paddy.²

¹ See Parker, *Folk-Tales of Ceylon*, the story called "The Thief called Harantikā," vol. 3, p. 41.

² See Parker, *Folk-Tales of Ceylon*, vol. 1, p. 28.





THE THIEF AND HIS SON

IN a small hamlet, at no great distance from the capital of one of the kings of *Laṅkā*, there lived a labourer who had a young and beautiful wife. This labourer was very poor, and his daily earnings were barely sufficient for himself and his wife to subsist upon.

When they were in this miserable situation, the woman found that she was pregnant, and communicated the news to her husband. The man was disconcerted at this intelligence, for the thought that his wife would bring into the world a being merely to be a sharer of their misfortunes pricked him to the heart.

One day the man was seated on the pila of his hut very much troubled by this thought, and with no prospect of bettering his circumstances, when his wife saw him and, suspecting the cause of his sadness, said to him: "I entreat you, my dear husband (literally, my golden father), to moderate your affliction and not to abandon yourself to despair. Though all other means of earning a livelihood have failed, there yet remains one which should be tried. Go to the wide world and

try your luck in the art of stealing. Your fate may yet change and your distresses may soon be alleviated."

The man thought this advice extremely opportune and, thanking the woman for having hit upon so effectual an expedient, set out the next morning, after embracing her and promising to return laden with wealth within as short a time as possible.

The woman, being now solely dependent on herself for her subsistence, went from house to house pounding paddy for a small remuneration in rice, with which she hoped to keep herself alive till her husband's return.

More than six months had elapsed but he had not returned, nor had any intelligence of him been received. The woman, however, consoled herself with the hope that he would not fail to come back before her confinement; but when she found that days and months rolled on without any news of him, she began to feel all those serious alarms which the long absence of a beloved husband could not fail to inspire.

At length she was brought to bed of a fine boy. When she had recovered from her illness she resumed her work of pounding paddy, hoping to see her husband back again with considerable booty. Her expectations, however, were not realised, and she looked upon her dear husband as for ever lost. Frequently she wept most bitterly, imputing the whole blame to herself in having given her husband advice which resulted in no good but, as she thought, in his death.

She and her son managed to drag a miserable existence to which, they thought, death was to be preferred. The son was now fifteen years of age, and matters seemed not to improve with them, but, on the contrary, to be getting worse and worse every day. Poverty stared them in the face and they were on the verge of starvation. The woman, now finding herself in a condition more deplorable than ever, called her son to her side and tenderly addressed him in the following words: "My dear son," said she, "your father left home on a stealing expedition after he became aware that I had conceived you, with no other object in view than to provide for our wants. He must have met with adverse fortune and must have perished by sickness or at the hand of justice. But I cannot persuade myself that he is really dead. I conjure you, therefore, to go in search of him and to bring him back to me if you should be so fortunate as to find him. May the fates be propitious to you, and may your expedition be attended with success."

The sagacious boy thought that it was impossible for him to search for his father whom he had never seen, but, dissembling his true intention, he embraced his mother, and taking leave of her set off more with the object of acquiring wealth by stealing than of gaining information about his father.

In his ramblings he came upon an ambalama (native rest-house), where he thought of taking repose during the night. He found in it only an elderly man who had by him a large mat-bag on which he bestowed more than ordinary attention, while affecting to be quite unconcerned about it. The boy was too wise not to conclude that the bag contained something very valuable. He, therefore, with well-affected indifference, kept on observing the man's movements and watching for an opportunity to make away with the bag. The man little expected any mishap to it, as the only traveller in the ambalama was a boy whose demeanour and look showed that he was a simpleton. He was, therefore, not so solicitous for the safety of his bag as he would otherwise have been.

As soon as the first opportunity presented itself the boy pounced upon the bag and off he went, leaving the man to bemoan his loss when he should become aware of it. He now directed his steps to his native place, which lay at a distance of four or five days' journey. Travelling by long stages he arrived at his house on the third day and presented the bag to his mother, who had been daily looking forward to his return. After receiving him most cordially she opened the bag and was in ecstasies of delight when she found that it contained all sorts of jewels, precious stones, and silver and gold coins. Their happiness now was unbounded and was only marred by the absence of the boy's father.

One day the woman was seated at the threshold of her house, contemplating her sudden transition from extreme poverty to wealth and affluence, when she found a man with a dirty piece of cloth round his waist wending his way towards her house. As he approached her, the woman recognised in him her beloved husband, and remained motionless with the excess of her surprise and delight. "Ah! My dear (golden) father," she said, "is it possible that you can be restored to me! Alas! I have wholly despaired of ever seeing you again." So saying she embraced him and shed a flood of tears over him.

When they had recovered from the emotion which the meeting after an absence of so many years necessarily produced, the man inquired about the child the woman was expecting when he left home. The woman informed him of the birth of her son, and added that he had a while ago gone to buy provisions for the day and would be back soon. She then inquired of her husband whether he had not been successful in his attempts at stealing. "Success attended me," he replied, "in every instance. I stole property of so great value that it would have sufficed for us and our posterity. I then thought it high time to return home, and putting my booty in a common mat-bag, in order to avoid suspicion, I set out at a lucky hour. After a few days' travelling I arrived at a village and halted for the night at an ambalama, where I thought my bag secure, as there were no other travellers in it. Within a very short time of my arrival there a poor boy came to the ambalama, but I did not apprehend the least cause for anxiety from him as he appeared so young and simple. A few minutes after, when I looked for the bag, it was not forthcoming, and, on looking about for the boy, I found that he, too, had disappeared. Imagine to yourself the extent of my grief at the loss of the fruits of sixteen years' hard toil, which alone inspired me with the sweet hope of leading a comfortable life with you." When he had finished these words he began to weep so bitterly that his wife could not restrain her own tears.

The woman, drying her eyes, said to her husband, "Weep not, my father. The boy who stole your bag is your own son, whom I bore to you in your absence. The bag and all its contents are safe in my trunk." So saying she took the man to the room and exhibited before him the jewels and coins and the other ornaments. When he recognised them his sorrow vanished and was succeeded by the greatest joy imaginable. He was ardently awaiting his son's return, in order that he might shower on him a thousand kisses. The presence of his son was the only thing wanting to complete his happiness. When the boy was returning home and had come near enough to be able to recognise the man whose bag he had stolen at the ambalama he was greatly alarmed, thinking that it would be all over with him and his mother, for he naturally concluded that the man had come to claim his bag and property, and to obtain justice. He was every moment expecting the man to rush upon him and to seize him. The mother, on

seeing her son yet afar off, informed her husband that it was their son. Whereupon the man ran up to him and carried him in his arms to the house, embracing and kissing him all the time. The boy's surprise at the strange behaviour of the man only ceased when his mother informed him that he was his father, and related to him the strange adventure that had happened to him.

The father, mother and son were now in the height of happiness, and considered themselves as the most favoured of mortals. There was nothing to disturb their tranquillity, and all was well with them, but for obvious reasons the man's return was kept strictly secret, and was not known to anyone but his wife and son.

As, however, man is never satisfied with his lot, the boy reflected that more wealth should be added to their stock and that, too, by the most effectual way—that of stealing. Having thus reflected, he went up to his father and laid before him a plan, fully matured by him, of stealing the king's pāmul-pettiya.

There was a tunnel leading to the king's palace from a certain part of the town. It was only large enough for a man of ordinary size to creep through—when, by whom and for what purpose this tunnel had been constructed were facts quite unknown, being beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

At dead of night, when all mortals are in profound sleep, the father and son got into this tunnel, unperceived by anyone, and armed with only a sharp knife—the father taking the lead and the son following him. On they crept until in a few minutes they were at the entrance to the palace. The father listened attentively to find out whether there was the least noise, and being satisfied that there was none he thrust out his head, only just enough to enable him to ascertain that the course was clear. Being convinced that he might enter without running any risk, he did so and found himself in the dining-hall of the palace, where he saw on tables the remnants of a sumptuous repast. His first care was to eat as much as his stomach could contain; he not only filled his stomach but the whole passage to it from the throat. After this, he softly stole into the king's bedroom, where the king and queen were fast asleep. He then gently approached the foot of the bed where the pāmul-pettiya was, and taking it up retraced his

steps as softly as he had entered the room. After reaching the mouth of the tunnel, he handed the box to his son and whispered him to recede while he thrust his head in to proceed forwards. He had not crept more than two or three cubits when he found that it was impossible to make farther progress, owing to the large dimensions his stomach had attained by the supper. He did all he could to compress himself, but, to his great mortification, he found that it was simply a matter of impossibility either to push himself through or to get back to the palace. He was literally stuck there. His son endeavoured to pull him by the head with all the force he could command, but the man could not be moved an inch.

In this predicament, the man, though overwhelmed with fears and anguish, addressed the son as follows: "My dear and darling son (literally, my golden and milky son), it is impossible for me to creep forwards or backwards. I am stuck here and shall be discovered in the morning, if not earlier, by the king's servants, as my feet are still jutting out through the mouth of the tunnel. My discovery will simply lead to yours, and that of your poor mother, and we shall all three be impaled or subjected to a worse form of death, preceded by inhuman tortures. It is better that one should perish instead of all three. As regards myself, I must die in any case, but I have hit upon a plan of saving you and your mother, and of escaping the horrible tortures which an enraged and infuriated monarch will delight to inflict. Another advantage in the plan is that you will escape the infamy attaching to thieves. Take, therefore, this knife and with it cut off my head, and dispose of it in such a way that it may never be discovered. Carry the box fearlessly to your mother, and present it to her. Without my head they will never be able to recognise me, and thus all the terrible and frightful consequences of a discovery will be averted. Lose no time, my son, but strike the fatal blow at once."

At these words the son was affected to an extent which can only be imagined. He, however, weighed well his father's words, and pictured to himself the tortures which his father would have to undergo if he was detected alive. He, therefore, concluded that it would be a merciful act to save his father from the tortures of the king by subjecting him to an easy death. Summoning, therefore, sufficient fortitude to execute the dreadful deed, he cut off his father's head.

Taking the head and the box he receded, and at length arrived at the entrance to the tunnel. His first care was to dispose of the head. He put it into a piriressa which he found on his way, and attaching it to a heavy stone so firmly that it could never be detached from it, he flung it into the river on which the city stood. He then bathed and washed his clothes, so that not a vestige of the blood remained in them. After taking these precautions to render detection impossible he went home and presented the box to his mother. The joy which the sight of the exquisite jewels created in her mind was only momentary, for the subsequent recital of the cruel fate of her husband immediately caused it to vanish and produced in her bosom the most distressing anguish. She gave vent to her feelings in the most pitiful manner and shed a torrent of tears. Her son mingled his tears with hers. After they had slightly overcome their grief they hid the box in such a place and in such a manner that it could never be discovered. The woman was inconsolable, but the son warned her not to give herself up to sorrow, as that would lead to the discovery of the whole adventure, and would bring on consequences frightful to be even thought of. They, therefore, dissembled their sorrow and remained as if no disaster had happened.

Next morning, when the king's servants were attending to their usual work in the palace, they were surprised to find the feet of a man jutting out of the secret tunnel. They touched the feet and concluded from their coldness that they must be those of a corpse. Unwilling to take upon themselves the responsibility of dragging the body out of the tunnel, they reported the matter to the king, who came up immediately with his attendants. They then dragged the body out by the legs, but to the great surprise of all present they found that the head had been cut off and removed. The whole tunnel was then thoroughly searched, but the head was not to be found. In the absence of the head the body could not be recognised. The palace was then searched, and it was found that the king's pāmul-pēt̄iya was missing. This caused no little consternation and annoyance to the king, who was foaming with rage and uttering the most dreadful imprecations. The palace was in an uproar and in the greatest confusion possible.

At length the king convened a council of ministers and wise men, but there was no solution of the mysterious occurrence. The more they attempted a solution the more they were

bewildered. At their suggestion rewards were offered and threats were made, but all to no purpose. A numbering of the people of the city and of the surrounding villages within a radius of several miles was also diligently made, but there was no one found missing whose absence was not satisfactorily accounted for.

The king then reassembled the council and expressed his great dissatisfaction that they should have been unable to arrive at a satisfactory solution of the mystery. At length an old councillor, who was noted for his sagacity and acuteness of intellect and had, besides, the reputation of being a sage, broke silence, and thus addressed the king : " Sire, the love of those to whom one is dear must manifest itself in some visible or audible form, such as crying, weeping or sobbing, when the dead body of the object of their affection is presented to their eyes. This is specially true of the weaker sex. Command, therefore, the corpse to be dragged through the town, and through the compound of each house in the surrounding villages, and let a proclamation issue requiring all the inmates of every house, on pain of death, to be outside their houses when the corpse is so dragged. When it is seen by the wife, or mother, or any other near relatives, male or female, of the man, they would in spite of themselves give full vent to their grief by weeping or in some other manner. This, I am persuaded, is the only way by which the mystery could be solved."

The plan suggested by the sage met with the approval of the king and of the whole council, who now arose, applauding the wisdom of the sage, and with full confidence that the mystery would be soon solved.

The proclamation suggested by the sage was then made by beat of tom-tom throughout the town and surrounding villages. As soon as the boy heard it he called his mother to the room and said : " Mother ! they will soon drag the corpse of my beloved father through our compound ; when you see it, as you must, would you be able to conceal or repress all emotions and keep yourself from crying ? "

" That would be an impossibility," replied the mother, " I am sure I shall shed a torrent of tears and go off into a loud and bitter lamentation if I see the body of my dead husband."

" If such be the case," rejoined the son, " I shall climb up the muruṅgā-tree in our compound, and shall allow myself to fall down on the ground from it when they are about to enter

the compound. As soon as I have fallen down you must run and embrace me and lift me up, crying bitterly. Your lamentation will then be attributed to my fall, and not to the sight of the corpse."

At length the corpse was within the sight of the woman's house. Thereupon the boy climbed up the muruṅgā-tree, and managed to fall down on the ground just as the corpse was being dragged into the compound. The woman immediately rushed up to the boy, and embracing him gave full vent to her feelings by shedding a flood of tears, which the sight of her husband's corpse had induced. In this manner the detection was evaded, and all attempts on the part of the king's council to trace the culprit's family were rendered abortive, and the matter remained ever since an absolute mystery.

The boy and his mother lived happily and comfortably all the days of their lives, and their happiness was only marred by the recollection now and then of the tragical end the woman's husband had met with.



CHINA

CHINESE literature can be said to have been founded at the time of the birth of Confucius in 551 B.C. In that century the Chinese were in possession of a written language, fully adequate to the most varied expression of human thought. Yet "No torrents of passion (as opposed to descriptions of passion) nor eloquent denunciations break the calm narratives of Chinese story-tellers."¹ This is to a certain extent true if it is a matter of comparison with Western standards. It must also be borne in mind that classical Chinese literature has fortunately not been influenced save from possible conceptions which are fundamental to the literature of Buddhism. Among the collections of Chinese stories the *Chin Ku Ch'i Kuan or Marvellous Tales*, and *P'u Sung-Ling's Liao-Chai-Chih I, or Strange Stories* have been translated into European languages. It was in 1877 when Professor Giles was acting as Vice-Consul at Canton that he began his translation of the latter collection. Sung-ling was born in about 1631 at Tzuchou in the province of Shantung. The author was too poor to publish his stories, and it was not until 1740 that his grandson had them printed in China in sixteen volumes. They are tales of "Taoist devilry and magic"; most of them very brief episodes of an extraordinary charm. "I am," wrote Sung-ling, "rather animated by the Spirit of Su Tung p'o, who loves to hear men speak of the supernatural. I get people to commit what they tell me to writing, and subsequently I dress it up in the form of a story; and thus in the lapse of time my friends from all quarters have supplied me with quantities of material, which from my habit of collecting has grown into a vast pile."² "Miss Ying-Ning, or the Laughing Girl," the story included here, has rather more "story" to relate and less magic. "Wang Tzu-fu's Wooing" has a most pleasing and precious wit.

The author of the "Three Dedicated Rooms" was Li Yü (1611-1680?), dramatist, poet and essayist, whose family home was in Lan-ch'i, Chekiang, though he himself was born in Ju-Kao, Kiang'su. When the Ming dynasty collapsed he gave up further thoughts of a political life and became a writer. He supported a household of forty members as well as a troupe of singing girls.

In about 1657 he made his first journey to Peking, and when he returned he settled near the South Gate at Nanking where he built a villa and garden and opened a bookshop, all of which he called Mustard Seed Garden. On travelling to P'ing-yang, in the province

¹ Douglas, *Chinese Stories*, 1898.

² Giles, *Chinese Literature*, p. 340.

of Shansi, he acquired his favourite concubine, Ch'iao-chi, whose accomplishments at singing and acting made her the most distinguished of his troupe of beautiful girls. For some years thereon he travelled extensively and his affairs prospered, only to later find himself poverty stricken. But in 1678 he was able through the help of his friends to raise sufficient money to return to his province.

His fame as a writer is considerable, though nothing of his work is known here, save for a very recently translated essay, "On Charm in Women," by Lin Yutang. He wrote many plays and two long novels, *Jou p'u-t'uan* and the *Hui-wen Chuan*, which are attributed to him. The former's eroticism, however, led to its being banned. The story here from the *Shih-eh lou*, is one of twelve, and were first printed in 1658, and translated into English by Sir John Francis Davis, though he gave no indication as to whom the author was.²

"The Courtesan" is one of the forty stories from the *Chin Ku Ch'i Kuan or Observations of Strange Matters, New and Old*. This collection of "small talk" as the Chinese called their tales, were collected towards the end of the Ming Dynasty. The authorship of them has never been defined but according to the translator of the present tale, E. B. Howell, "The Old Man Embracing the Jar," was said to be the Editor.

² See Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ching Period*, vol. i. p. 495 *et seq.* (Library of Congress, U.S.A.).



MISS YING-NING, OR THE LAUGHING GIRL

AT Lo-tien, in the province of Shantung, there lived a youth named Wang Tzü-fu, who had been left an orphan when quite young. He was a clever boy, and took his bachelor's degree at the age of fourteen, being quite his mother's pet, and not allowed by her to stray far from home. One young lady to whom he had been betrothed having unhappily died, he was still in search of a wife when, on the occasion of the Feast of Lanterns, his cousin Wu asked him to come along for a stroll. But they had hardly got beyond the village before one of his uncle's servants caught them up and told Wu he was wanted. The latter accordingly went back; but Wang, seeing plenty of nice girls about and being in high spirits himself, proceeded on alone. Amongst others, he noticed a young lady with her maid. She had just picked a sprig of plum-blossom, and was the prettiest girl he had ever heard of—a perfect bunch of smiles. He stared and stared at her quite regardless of appearances; and when she had passed by, she said to her maid, "That young fellow has a wicked look in his eyes." As she was walking away, laughing and talking, the flower dropped

out of her hand ; and Wang, picking it up, stood there disconsolate as if he had lost his wits. He then went home in a very melancholy mood ; and, putting the flower under his pillow, lay down to sleep. He would neither talk nor eat ; and his mother became very anxious about him, and called in the aid of the priests.¹ By degrees, he fell off in flesh and got very thin ; and the doctor felt his pulse and gave him medicines to bring out the disease. Occasionally, he seemed bewildered in his mind, but in spite of all his mother's inquiries would give no clue as to the cause of his malady.

One day when his cousin Wu came to the house, Wang's mother told him to try and find out what was the matter ; and the former, approaching the bed, gradually and quietly led up to the point in question. Wang, who had wept bitterly at the sight of his cousin, now repeated to him the whole story, begging him to lend some assistance in the matter. "How foolish you are, cousin," cried Wu ; "there will be no difficulty at all, I'll make inquiries for you. The girl herself can't belong to a very aristocratic family to be walking alone in the country. If she's not already engaged, I have no doubt we can arrange the affair ; and even if she is unwilling, an extra outlay will easily bring her round.² You make haste and get well : I'll see to it all." Wang's features relaxed when he heard these words ; and Wu left him to tell his mother how the case stood, immediately setting on foot inquiries as to the whereabouts of the girl. All his efforts, however, proved fruitless, to the great disappointment of Wang's mother ; for since his cousin's visit Wang's colour and appetite had returned. In a few days Wu called again, and in answer to Wang's questions falsely told him that the affair was settled. "Who do you think the young lady is ?" said he. "Why, a cousin of ours, who is only waiting to be betrothed ; and though you two are a little near,³

¹ Sickness being supposed to result from evil influences, witchcraft, etc., just as often as from more natural causes.

² The rule which guides betrothals in China is that "the doors should be opposite," i.e. that the families of the bride and bridegroom should be of equal position in the social scale. Any unpleasantness about the value of the marriage presents, and so on, is thereby avoided.

³ Marriages between persons of the same surname is forbidden by law, for such are held to be blood relations, descended lineally from the original couple of that name. Inasmuch, however, as the line of descent is traced through the male branches only, a man may marry his cousins on the maternal side without let or hindrance except that of sentiment, which is sufficiently strong to keep these alliances down to a minimum.

I daresay the circumstances of the case will be allowed to overrule this objection." Wang was overjoyed, and asked where she lived ; so Wu had to tell another lie, and say, " On the south-west hills, about ten miles from here." Wang begged him again and again to do his best for him, and Wu undertook to get the betrothal satisfactorily arranged. He then took leave of his cousin, who from this moment was rapidly restored to health. Wang drew the flower from underneath his pillow, and found that, though dried up, the leaves had not fallen away. He often sat playing with this flower and thinking of the young lady ; but by-and-by, as Wu did not reappear, he wrote a letter and asked him to come. Wu pleaded other engagements, being unwilling to go ; at which Wang got in a rage and quite lost his good spirits ; so that his mother, fearing a relapse, proposed to him a speedy betrothal in another quarter. Wang shook his head at this, and sat day after day waiting for Wu, until his patience was thoroughly exhausted. He then reflected that ten miles was no great distance, and that there was no particular reason for asking anybody's aid ; so, concealing the flower in his sleeve, he went off in a huff by himself without letting it be known.

Having no opportunity of asking the way, he made straight for the hills ; and after about ten miles' walking found himself right in the midst of them, enjoying their exquisite verdure, but meeting no one, and with nothing better than mountain paths to guide him. Away down in the valley below, almost buried under a densely luxuriant growth of trees and flowers, he espied a small hamlet, and began to descend the hill and make his way thither. He found very few houses, and all built of rushes, but otherwise pleasant enough to look at. Before the door of one, which stood at the northern end of the village, were a number of graceful willow trees, and inside the wall plenty of peach and apricot trees, with tufts of bamboo between them, and birds chirping on the branches. As it was a private house he did not venture to go in, but sat down to rest himself on a huge smooth stone opposite the front door. By and by he heard a girl's voice from within calling out " Hsiao-jung " ; and, noticing that it was a sweet-toned voice, set himself to listen, when a young lady passed with a bunch of apricot flowers in her hand, and occupied in putting hairpins into her downcast head. As soon as she raised her face she saw Wang, and stopped putting in hair-pins ; then, smothering

a laugh, picked a few flowers and ran in. Wang perceived to his intense delight that she was none other than his heroine of the Feast of Lanterns ; but recollecting that he had no right to follow her in, was on the point of calling after her as his cousin. There was no one, however, in the street, and he was afraid lest he might have made a mistake ; neither was there anybody at the door of whom he could make inquiries. So he remained there in a very restless state till the sun was well down in the west, and his hopes were almost at an end, forgetting all about food and drink. He then saw the young lady peep through the door, apparently very much astonished to find him still there ; and in a few minutes out came an old woman leaning on a stick, who said to him, " Whence do you come, sir ? I hear you have been here ever since morning. What is it you want ? Aren't you hungry ? " Wang got up, and making a bow, replied that he was in search of some relatives of his ; but the old woman was deaf and didn't catch what he said, so he had to shout it out again at the top of his voice. She asked him what their names were, but he was unable to tell her ; at which she laughed and said, " It is a funny thing to look for people when you don't know their names. I am afraid you are an unpractical gentleman. You had better come in and have something to eat ; we'll give you a bed and you can go back to-morrow and find out the names of the people you are in quest of." Now Wang was just beginning to get hungry, and, besides, this would bring him nearer to the young lady ; so he readily accepted and followed the old woman in. They walked along a paved path banked on both sides with hibiscus, the leaves of which were scattered about on the ground ; and passing ~~through~~ another door, entered a courtyard full of trained creepers and other flowers. The old woman showed Wang into a small room with beautifully white walls and a branch of a crab-apple tree coming through the window, the furniture being also nice and clean. They had hardly sat down when it was clear that someone was taking a peep through the window ; whereupon the old woman cried out, " Hsiao-jung ! make haste and get dinner," and a maid from outside immediately answered " Yes, ma'am." Meanwhile, Wang had been explaining who he was ; and then the old lady said, " Was your maternal grandfather named Wu ? " " He was," replied Wang. " Well, I never ! " cried the old woman, " he was my uncle, and your mother and

I are cousins. But in consequence of our poverty, and having no sons, we have kept quite to ourselves, and you have grown to be a man without my knowing you." "I came here," said Wang, "about my cousin, but in the hurry I forgot your name." "My name is Ch'in," replied the old lady; "I have no son: only a girl, the child of a concubine, who, after my husband's death, married again,⁴ and left her daughter with me. She's a clever girl, but has had very little education; full of fun and ignorant of the sorrows of life. I'll send for her by and by to make your acquaintance." The maid then brought in the dinner—a large dish of choice morsels of fowl—and the old woman pressed him to eat. When they had finished, and the things were taken away, the old woman said, "Call Miss Ning," and the maid went off to do so. After some time there was a giggling at the door, and the old woman cried out, "Ying-ning! your cousin is here." Then there was a great tittering as the maid pushed her in, stopping her mouth all the time to try and keep from laughing. "Don't you know better than to behave like that?" asked the old woman, "and before a stranger, too." So Ying-ning controlled her feelings, and Wang made her a bow, the old woman saying, "Mr. Wang is your cousin: you have never seen him before. Isn't that funny?" Wang asked how old his cousin was, but the old woman didn't hear him, and he had to say it again, which sent Ying-ning off into another fit of laughter. "I told you," observed the old woman, "she hadn't much education; now you see it. She is sixteen years old, and as foolish as a baby." "One year younger than I am," remarked Wang. "Oh, you're seventeen are you? Then you were born in the year —, under the sign of the horse."⁵ Wang nodded assent, and then the old woman asked who his wife was, to which Wang replied that he had none. "What! a clever handsome young fellow of seventeen not yet engaged?" Ying-ning is

⁴ A very unjustifiable proceeding in Chinese eyes, unless driven to it by actual poverty.

⁵ The Chinese years are distinguished by the names of twelve animals—namely, rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse, sheep, monkey, cock, dog and boar. To the common question, "What is your honourable age?" the reply is frequently, "I was born under the —"; and the hearer by a short mental calculation can tell at once how old the speaker is, granting, of course, the impossibility of making an error of so much as twelve years.

⁶ Parents in China like to get their sons married as early as possible, in the hope of seeing themselves surrounded by grandsons, and the family name in no danger of extinction. Girls are generally married at from fifteen to seventeen.

not engaged either: you two would make a nice pair if it wasn't for the relationship." Wang said nothing, but looked hard at his cousin; and just then the maid whispered to her, "It is the fellow with the wicked eyes! He's at his old game." Ying-ning laughed, and proposed to the maid that they should go and see if the peaches were in blossom or not; and off they went together, the former with her sleeve stuffed into her mouth until she got outside, where she burst into a hearty fit of laughing. The old woman gave orders for a bed to be got ready for Wang, saying to him, "It's not often we meet; you must spend a few days with us now you are here, and then we'll send you home. If you are at all dull, there's a garden behind where you can amuse yourself, and books for you to read." So next day Wang strolled into the garden, which was of moderate size, with a well-kept lawn and plenty of trees and flowers. There was also an arbour consisting of three posts with a thatched roof, quite shut in on all sides by the luxurious vegetation. Pushing his way among the flowers, Wang heard a noise from one of the trees, and looking up saw Ying-ning, who at once burst out laughing and nearly fell down. "Don't! don't!" cried Wang, "you'll fall!" Then Ying-ning came down, giggling all the time, until, when she was near the ground, she missed her hold, and tumbled down with a run. This stopped her merriment, and Wang picked her up, gently squeezing her hand as he did so. Ying-ning began laughing again, and was obliged to lean against a tree for support, it being some time before she was able to stop. Wang waited till she had finished and then drew the flower out of his sleeve and handed it to her. "It's dead," said she; "why do you keep it?" "You dropped it, cousin, at the Feast of Lanterns," replied Wang, "so I kept it." She then asked him what was his object in keeping it, to which he answered, "To show my love, and that I have not forgotten you. Since that day when we met, I have been very ill from thinking so much of you, and am quite changed from what I was. But now that it is my unexpected good fortune to meet you, I pray you have pity on me." "You needn't make such a fuss about a trifle," replied she, "and with your own relatives, too. I'll give orders to supply you with a whole basketful of flowers when you go away." Wang told her she did not understand, he said, "I didn't

care for the flower itself; it was the person who picked the flower." "Of course," answered she, "everybody cares for their relations; you needn't have told me that." "I wasn't talking about ordinary relations," said Wang, "but about husbands and wives." "What's the difference?" asked Ying-ning. "Why," replied Wang, "husband and wife are always together." "Just what I shouldn't like," cried she, "to be always with anybody."⁷ At this juncture up came the maid, and Wang slipped quietly away. By and by they all met again in the house, and the old woman asked Ying-ning where they had been; whereupon she said they had been talking in the garden. "Dinner has been ready a long time. I can't think what you have had to say all this while," grumbled the old woman. "My cousin," answered Ying-ning, "has been talking to me about husbands and wives." Wang was much disconcerted, and made a sign to her to be quiet, so she smiled and said no more; and the old woman luckily did not catch her words, and asked her to repeat them. Wang immediately put her off with something else, and whispered to Ying-ning that she had done very wrong. The latter did not see that; and when Wang told her that what he had said was private, answered him that she had no secrets from her old mother. "Besides," added she, "what harm can there be in talking on such a common topic as husbands and wives?" Wang was angry with her for being so dull, but there was no help for it; and by the time dinner was over he found some of his mother's servants had come in search of him, bringing a couple of donkeys with them.

It appeared that his mother, alarmed at his non-appearance, had made strict search for him in the village; and when unable to discover any traces of him, had gone off to the Wu family to consult. There her nephew, who recollects what he had previously said to young Wang, advised that a search should be instituted in the direction of the hills; and accordingly the servants had been to all the villages on the way until they had at length recognised him as he was coming out of the door. Wang went in and told the old woman, begging that he might

⁷ This scene should for ever disabuse people of the notion that there is no such thing as "making love" among the Chinese. I have even heard it gravely asserted by an educated native that not a few of his countrymen had "died for love" of the beautiful Miss Lin, the charming but fictitious heroine of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*.

be allowed to take Ying-ning with him. "I have had the idea in my head for several days," replied the old woman, overjoyed; "but I am a feeble old thing myself, and couldn't travel so far. If, however, you will take charge of my girl and introduce her to her aunt, I shall be very pleased." So she called Ying-ning, who came up laughing as usual; whereupon the old woman rebuked her, saying, "What makes you always laugh so? You would be a very good girl but for that silly habit. Now, here's your cousin, who wants to take you away with him. Make haste and pack up." The servants who had come for Wang were then provided with refreshment, and the old woman bade them both farewell, telling Ying-ning that her aunt was quite well enough off to maintain her, and that she had better not come back. She also advised her not to neglect her studies, and to be very attentive to her elders, adding that she might ask her aunt to provide her with a good husband. Wang and Ying-ning then took their leave; and when they reached the brow of the hill, they looked back and could just discern the old woman leaning against the door and gazing towards the north. On arriving at Wang's home, his mother, seeing a nice-looking young girl with him, asked in astonishment who she might be; and Wang at once told her the whole story. "But that was all an invention of your cousin Wu's," cried his mother; "I haven't got a sister, and consequently I can't have such a niece." Ying-ning here observed, "I am not the daughter of the old woman; my father was named Ch'in and died when I was a little baby, so that I can't remember anything." "I *had* a sister," said Wang's mother, "who actually did marry a Mr. Ch'in, but she died many years ago, and can't still be living, of course." However, on inquiring as to facial appearance and characteristic marks, Wang's mother was obliged to acknowledge the identity, wondering at the same time how her sister could be alive when she had died many years before. Just then in came Wu, and Ying-ning retired within; and when he heard the story, remained some time lost in astonishment, and then said, "Is this young lady's name Ying-ning?" Wang replied that it was, and asked Wu how he came to know it. "Mr. Ch'in," answered he, "after his wife's death was bewitched by a fox, and subsequently died. The fox had a daughter named Ying-ning, as was well known to all the family; and when Mr. Ch'in died, as the fox

still frequented the place, the Taoist pope⁸ was called in to exorcise it. The fox then went away, taking Ying-ning with it, and now here she is." While they were thus discussing, peals of laughter were heard coming from within, and Mrs. Wang took occasion to remark what a foolish girl she was. Wu begged to be introduced, and Mrs. Wang went in to fetch her, finding her in an uncontrollable fit of laughter, which she subdued only with great difficulty, and by turning her face to the wall. By and by she went out; but, after making a bow, ran back and burst out laughing again, to the great discomfiture of all the ladies. Wang then said he would go and find out for them all about Ying-ning and her queer story, so as to be able to arrange the marriage; but when he reached the spot indicated, the village and houses had all vanished, and nothing was to be seen except hill-flowers scattered about here and there. Wu recollects that Mrs. Ch'in had been buried at no great distance from that spot; he found, however, that the grave had disappeared, and he was no longer able to determine its position. Not knowing what to make of it all, he returned home, and then Mrs. Wang told him she thought the girl must be a disembodied spirit. Ying-ning showed no signs of alarm at this remark; neither did she cry at all when Mrs. Wang began to condole with her on no longer having a home. She only laughed in her usual silly way, and fairly puzzled them all. Sharing Miss Wang's room, she now began to take her part in the duties of a daughter of the family; and as for needlework, they had rarely seen anything like hers for fineness. But she could not get over that trick of laughing, which, by the way, never interfered with her good looks, and consequently rather amused people than otherwise, amongst others a young married lady who lived next door. Wang's mother fixed an auspicious day for the wedding, but still feeling suspicious about Ying-ning, was always secretly watching her. Finding, however, that she had a proper shadow,⁹ and that there was nothing extraordinary

⁸ The semi-divine head of the Taoist religion, sometimes called the Master of Heaven. In his body is supposed to reside the soul of a celebrated Taoist, an ancestor of his, who actually discovered the elixir of life and became an immortal some eighteen hundred years ago. At death, the precious soul above mentioned will take up its abode in the body of some youthful member of the family to be hereinafter revealed.

⁹ Disembodied spirits are supposed to have no shadow, and but very little appetite. There are also certain occasions on which they cannot stand the smell of sulphur. Fiske, in his *Myths and Myth-makers* (p. 230), says "Almost universally, ghosts, however impervious to thrust of sword or shot of pistol, can eat and drink like Squire Westerns."

in her behaviour, she had her dressed up when the day came in all the finery of a bride ; and would have made her perform the usual ceremonies, only Ying-ning laughed so much she was unable to kneel down. They were accordingly obliged to excuse her, but Wang began to fear that such a foolish girl would never be able to keep the family council. Luckily, she was very reticent, and did not indulge in gossip ; and, moreover, when Mrs. Wang was in trouble or out of temper, Ying-ning could always bring her round with a laugh. The maid-servants, too, if they expected a whipping for anything, would always ask her to be present when they appeared before their mistress, and thus they often escaped punishment. Ying-ning had a perfect passion for flowers. She got all she could out of her relations, and even secretly pawned her jewels to buy rare specimens ; and by the end of a few months the whole place was one mass of flowers. Behind the house there was one especial tree,¹⁰ which belonged to the neighbours on that side ; but Ying-ning was always climbing up and picking the flowers, for which Mrs. Wang rebuked her severely, though without any result.

One day the owner saw her, and gazed at her some time in rapt astonishment ; however, she didn't move, deigning only to laugh. The gentleman was much smitten with her ; and when she smilingly descended the wall on her own side, pointing all the time with her finger to a spot hard by, he thought she was making an assignation. So he presented himself at night-fall at the same place, and sure enough Ying-ning was there. Seizing her hand, to tell his passion, he found that he was grasping only a log of wood which stood against the wall ; and the next thing he knew was that a scorpion had stung him violently on the finger. There was an end of his romance, except that he died of the wound during the night, and his family at once commenced an action against Wang for having a witch-wife. The magistrate happened to be a great admirer of Wang's talent, and knew him to be an accomplished scholar ; he therefore refused to grant the summons, and ordered the prosecutor to be bamboozled for false accusation.¹¹ Wang interposed and got him off this punishment, and returned home himself. His mother scolded Ying-ning well, saying, "I knew your too playful disposition would some day bring sorrow

¹⁰ The *Mu hsiang* or *Costus amarus*.

¹¹ Strictly in accordance with Chinese criminal law.

upon you. But for our intelligent magistrate we should have been in a nice mess. Any ordinary hawk-like official would have had you publicly interrogated in court; and then how could your husband have held up his head again?" Ying-ning looked grave and did not laugh this time; and Mrs. Wang continued; "There's no harm in laughing as long as it is reasonable laughter"; but from that moment Ying-ning laughed no more, no matter what people did to make her, though at the same time her expression was by no means gloomy. One evening she went in tears to her husband, who wanted to know what was the matter. "I couldn't tell you before," said she, sobbing; "we had only known each other such a short time. But now that you and your mother have been so kind to me, I will keep nothing from you, but tell you all. I am the daughter of a fox. When my mother went away she put me in the charge of the disembodied spirit of an old woman, with whom I remained for a period of over ten years. I have no brothers: only you to whom I can look. And now my foster-mother is lying on the hillside with no one to bury her and appease her discontented shade. If not too much, I would ask you to do this, that her spirit may be at rest, and know that it was not neglected by her whom she brought up."

Wang consented, but said he feared they would not be able to find her grave; on which Ying-ning said there was no danger of that, and accordingly they set forth together. When they arrived, Ying-ning pointed out the tomb in a lonely spot amidst a thicket of brambles, and there they found the old woman's bones. Ying-ning wept bitterly, and then they proceeded to carry her remains home with them, subsequently interring them in the Ch'in family vault. That night Wang dreamt that the old woman came to thank him and when he waked he told Ying-ning, who said that she had seen her also, and had been warned by her not to frighten Mr. Wang. Her husband asked why she had not detained the old lady; but Ying-ning replied, "She is a disembodied spirit, and would be ill at ease for any time surrounded by so much life."¹² Wang then inquired after Hsiao-jung, and his wife said, "She was a fox, too, and a very clever one. My foster-mother kept her to wait on me, and she was always

¹² These disembodied spirits are unable to stand for any length of time the light and life of this upper world, darkness and death being as it were necessary to their existence and comfort.

getting fruit and cakes for me, so that I have a friendship for her and shall never forget her. My foster-mother told me yesterday she was married."

After this, whenever the great fast-day¹² came round, husband and wife went off without fail to worship at the Ch'in family tomb; and by the time a year had passed she gave birth to a son, who wasn't a bit afraid of strangers, but laughed at everybody, and, in fact, took very much after his mother.

¹² The day before the annual spring festival.

THE COURTESAN¹

I

The cruel Tartar hordes are swept aside,
The Imperial Court is founded now secure,
The Dragon soars, the Phoenix flies aloft,
His power established like a rocky height.
To eastward, ocean forms a barrier safe
Stretching to where the waters join the sky,
Towards the west, the mountains, range on range
Rear up their ramparts. From the frontier forts
Lances and spears are carried boldly forth
Beyond the Wall and every part pervade.
Now from the nations all in distant parts
Envoy in robes of state their tribute bring
And recognise the Emperor as their lord,
A great peace broods upon the happy land,
And this great dynasty, now founded sure,
Will never die till dies the mighty sun.

THIS poem was written to celebrate the establishment of our Court at the capital of Yen,² of which the situation is thus. On the north it is protected by a mighty barrier of mountains;

¹ If an apology be needed for the setting of this story, it may be stated that there are practical difficulties which render nearly impossible a Chinese love-story after the western manner. For it hardly ever happens that one of the well-to-do classes sees his wife before marriage, and if a young man meets one of the opposite sex who is not a member of his own home circle, she is generally of the unfortunate class.

It may seem strange that, in a country where early marriage and concubinage are universal, there should be room for the profession round which this story is centred, but that this is so is a fact of which there is ample evidence in any large Chinese city. Recruits are made solely by purchase of female children from parents who, owing to famine or other cause, are unable to provide for a too numerous offspring.

To take a concubine from the unfortunate class is a step which is generally regarded with disfavour, but should this step be taken, or should a courtesan acquire enough money to purchase her own freedom, a kindly custom renders it impossible for a mistress to refuse to allow the redemption of any inmate of her establishment.

A concubine is acquired, as a rule, by purchase and is regarded as the property of the purchaser, who is called her "master." Her position in the household is practically that of a slave, but the Chinese are a tolerant race and harmony with the wife is the rule rather than the exception.

² Yen Ching ("the Capital of Yen") is a name by which Peking is still known in literary style. Yen was the name of an ancient state in north China which lost its independence many centuries before the Ming dynasty, but at

on the south it looks down upon the full expanse of the whole land. It is indeed an invincible city, as puissant as heaven itself, and its power will never be overthrown in ten thousand years.

As is well known, the Emperor Hung Wu, having put to flight and obliterated the Tartars, founded the City of the Buried Gold, afterwards called Nanking or the Southern Capital. Then the Prince of Yen, Yung Lo, came down from the north, and, after finally bringing tranquillity to the land, moved the Court to his own chief city, which he called Peking or the Northern Capital. By reason of this change a cold and bitter city was transformed into a centre of refinement and luxury.

Following upon Yung Lo, who himself succeeded his nephew, there were nine emperors before the reign of Wan Li,³ who was

the time of this story the name still remained with territorial significance. Chu Yuan-chang, the founder of the Ming dynasty, after having established himself as Emperor (reigning as Hung Wu, 1368-1399) set up a civil government on the model of that of the T'ang emperors, including a system of territorial grants in outlying portions of the empire. His sons were among those who benefited in this way, and the most capable of them, the fourth, was made Prince of Yen.

At Hung Wu's death the throne descended, as the result of intrigue, not to any of his sons, but to his grandson, who at once attempted to deprive his uncles of their power and even of their lives. The Prince of Yen then revolted, and after four years of conflict succeeded in overcoming his nephew and establishing himself as the third Ming emperor (Yung Lo, 1408-1425). His accession was marked by fearful atrocities in the capital (Nanking) and elsewhere amongst those who had supported his nephew—deeds which are here euphemistically alluded to as "bringing tranquillity to the land"—and, as recorded in this story, he moved the capital of the empire to Peking, where it has remained ever since.

The old name (still often used) for Nanking was Chin Ling, which is generally translated "Golden Tomb." The meaning is rather "Buried Gold," and legend has it that King Wei of the Ch'u State (sixth century B.C.) finding that there was in that district an emanation conducive to the birth of kings, buried some gold there in order to stimulate that influence.

³ Wan Li was the thirteenth emperor (last but three) of the Ming dynasty and reigned from 1573 to 1620; not, as here stated, the eleventh emperor.

There is little to excuse the extravagant terms of praise with which the author of this story mentioned this reign, except considerations for his own safety should his identity become known, for the story must have been written during the reign of the son, grandson or grand-nephew of the emperor in question.

The reign of Wan Li was a long record of the most unprincipled misgovernment and oppression and ushered in the final downfall of the dynasty. Some restraint was exercised by the prime minister for the first few years of Wan Li's reign, but thereafter the empire was virtually controlled by eunuchs, and taxation in consequence reached a maximum.

This reign is, however, interesting to Europeans, in that it was about this time that trade with the west became constant. It was at this time that the Spaniards settled in the Philippine Islands, which they held until 1898. The Dutch and the Portuguese also established trading centres before and during the reign of Wan Li, and it was the same emperor who received and entertained the famous missionary, Matteo Ricci, who made his way to Peking and through his knowledge of astronomy and mathematics gained considerable influence at court.

thus the eleventh of the present dynasty. The Emperor Wan Li was a miracle of skill and intelligence, and his virtue and good fortune knew no flaw. He succeeded to the throne at the age of ten, and occupied it for forty-eight years. During his reign he put down three revolutionary risings, one in the west over Po Ch'eng-en, one over the Japanese leader, P'ing Hsiu-chih,⁴ and the third at Po Chou over Yang Ying-lung.

This P'ing Hsiu-chih invaded Korea, while the other two rebels were leaders of barbarian tribesmen who plotted revolt. All were brought successively into subjection, and of the outer barbarians there was not one tribe but feared and submitted, hastening to come with their tribute to the Court.

But of all this I wish to speak only of the invasion of Korea by the Japanese leader. In the twentieth year of Wan Li, the King of Korea petitioned the Throne to make known the urgency of his need, so the Son of Heaven sent troops over the sea to save him. The Board of Treasury, however, represented that the granaries, and the stocks of silver for paying the troops, were insufficient for so great a military enterprise, and proposed that a special tax be collected in return for permission to enter the Imperial Seminary. To this the Emperor assented.

Now this system had many advantages. It encouraged study, it enabled students to enter direct for the Chü-jen examination, it facilitated the intercourse of the learned, and it enabled a certain number of minor official posts to be given to those who were unsuccessful in obtaining their degree. So that the sons of officials and rich men, who were unwilling to compete for the Bachelor degree, were very ready to become "Chien Sheng." Thus was this system established, and, especially in Peking and Nanking, thousands of young men took advantage of this opportunity.⁵

⁴ P'ing Hsiu-chih was the Chinese name of the famous Japanese general, Taira Hideyoshi, afterwards Tycoon of Japan, who in 1592, seeing that affairs in Korea were in confusion owing to the misrule of the king, landed at Fusang with a large army and marched to Seoul, the capital, which he took and plundered. The King of Korea fled to the Yalu river in the north and implored the protection of the Chinese. An army was sent in response to this appeal, but it was defeated by the Japanese, who proceeded to invade Chinese Territory. The Chinese eventually got the upper hand by destroying Hideyoshi's supplies, and the invaders retired temporarily to Fusang.

⁵ The former system of examination for the civil service of China was a matter of supreme importance, for the examinations were the sole avenue to office, and therefore to riches, power and honour. Competitors were examined almost entirely in their knowledge of the classics, and a wise rule existed that no one, on appointment as an official, could serve in his own province. The

Amongst them was a youth named Li Kan-hsien, whose family home was at Shao Hsing in the Che-kiang province. His father was Provincial Treasurer and had three sons, of whom Kan-hsien was the eldest. Kan-hsien had studied since his childhood and had attained his bachelor degree but had not yet passed as Chü-jen, so he took advantage of the new

examinations were open to all except those of a status held to be disreputable, such as actors, barbers and executioners ; and, in theory, no favour was shown.

Though complicated in detail, the system in outline was simple. The three chief literary degrees were those of Hsiu Ts'ai (" Refined Talent "), Chü Jen (" The Man Raised Up ") and Chin Shih (" Advanced Scholar "), and in earlier times only Chin Shih could hold office ; later, however, Chü Jen were admitted. The examination for the Hsiu Ts'ai degree was held yearly in each provincial capital ; that for Chü Jen was held triennially in the provincial capital, where only Hsiu Ts'ai were allowed to compete, and in Peking : while Chin Shih were selected from Chü Jen by triennial examination in Peking alone.

Those who had obtained the degree of Hsiu Ts'ai had, pending the examination for the Chü Jen degree, to pass a yearly intermediate examination to show that they were keeping up their studies, and if events necessitated a change of residence of a Hsiu Ts'ai, he had to obtain written permission to study elsewhere than at home. Failure in either of these two respects was apt to entail cancellation of his degree.

The most difficult examination to pass was that for the Chü Jen degree. Into this test, possibly owing to the large number of competitors, luck entered largely, and those of outstanding ability often failed several times before success ultimately rewarded their efforts.

The Imperial Seminary mentioned has an interesting history. It was the development of an educational establishment which existed from the earliest times and bore various names through succeeding dynasties, being first called the Kuo Tzu Chien or " National Seminary " in A.D. 607. Its object was originally the instruction of scions of the imperial house. Later, sons of high officials were also admitted, but no modification of its original character as a purely educational establishment was made until the Ming dynasty, when it was used as a means of raising money ostensibly to meet national emergencies. This was easily possible from the fact that those admitted bore the honorary title of Chien Sheng (" Students of the Seminary ") and were exempt from various state services and also obtained easy access to the higher literary degrees and consequently to official appointment. This principle, which was strongly condemned by contemporary censors, was introduced during the reign of the Emperor Chin T'ai (1450), payment being made first in kind—grain, fodder, or horses for military use—and subsequently in silver, until in later Ch'ing times the degree of Chien Sheng was purchasable for the paltry sum of twenty taels (£8).

In the present story, it is pointed out that the seminary was specially intended to enable those who had not obtained the Hsiu Ts'ai degree to compete in the Chü Jen examination, but even for passed Hsiu Ts'ai, like Li Kan-hsien, the seminary afforded a special advantage in that the number of competitors who were passed as Chü Jen in the capital was proportionately greater than in the provincial tests, while the standard was lower. The competition for Chien Sheng was, therefore, much less severe.

It is more than likely that the author of this story in his remarks upon the Kuo Tzu Chien, as in his eulogy of the Emperor Wan Li, was writing sarcastically.

The former civil service examination system, which was uniform throughout China, has now entirely disappeared, and so far no uniform system has replaced it, a fact which militates against the possibility of satisfactory government.

system and became a Chien Sheng, together with a fellow-townsman named Liu Yü-ch'un.

And together they wandered one day to the gay side of the city of Peking, and there they met a singing girl called Tu Wei, who, as she was the tenth arrival in the quarter, was also called Decima.

From head to foot, how beautiful is she !
Fragrant and peerless, fair as fair can be.
Her brows are arched like lines of distant hills,
Bright gleam her eyes like sun on autumn rills.
Fresh as the lotus petal is her hue,
Lips like a rosy peach all bright with dew.
Vainly among the maids of ancient time
You'd seek a nymph of beauty so sublime.
Alas that such a gem should sullied be
By dust and wind, by man's iniquity !

This Decima had become a courtesan at the age of thirteen. She was not nineteen, and many were the sons of the rich and noble who had met her, each one in turn being bewitched by her beauty to such an extent that he would have risked the overthrow of his family and the loss of his fortune to gain her favour. And among the other courtesans it used to be said :

When Miss Decima is with us, one who drinks one cup
of wine
Then can quaff a thousand goblets, so bewitched is he,
And the best of us beside her, even with such looks as
mine,
Like a hag or a she-devil seems to be !

II

Now, although Mr. Li had taken to ways of pleasure and amusement at an early age, he had never set eyes upon one whom he considered to be a really beautiful girl, so when he met Decima his joy knew no bounds and his whole existence seemed to be concentrated upon her alone. The young gentleman was naturally handsome and amiable, and he was also very generous and good-natured. He and Decima took to each other at once and became each day more devoted. The brothel mistress was a most avaricious and virtueless woman, and Miss Decima had long had a wish to turn from the ways of vice and follow the paths of virtue. So when she saw that

Mr. Li was generous and kind, she became very anxious to throw in her lot with him for ever. Mr. Li was in great awe of his father and hardly dared to take her home, but in spite of this the two loved each other ever more dearly, and day after day, early and late, they remained in each other's company, living like husband and wife. And they swore a great oath that neither would love anyone else.

The brothel mistress observed that Miss Decima had been completely taken up by Mr. Li, never even being seen by any other young spendthrift; and at first, when he spent his money freely she laughed to herself, shrugging her shoulders with joy, and did all she could to flatter and encourage him. But days and months passed till a year or more had sped, and Mr. Li's resources began to become depleted and his hand could no longer act as his heart directed. The old woman then began to discourage him. His father, the Provincial Treasurer, heard that his son was frequenting brothels, and sent letter after letter telling him to return home. But the son was entirely infatuated with Decima's beauty and kept putting off his departure from day to day. And when he heard that his father had become extremely angry with him, he was all the less inclined to obey the summons to return home.

The proverb says that a friendship which is based on money will be dissolved when the money runs low. But Decima was really in love with Mr. Li, and when she knew his funds had become exhausted she became even more fond of him than ever. The old woman, her mistress, did not cease to tell her to send Mr. Li about his business, and, seeing that the girl was not likely to do so, she herself began to insult Mr. Li to his face so as to anger him and cause him to leave in indignation. But she found that her insults had no effect upon Mr. Li (for he was naturally of a placid disposition) and turned her attention again to Decima.

"We of the trade," she said, "depend solely upon our clients for the clothes we wear and the food which we eat. When we speed the parting guest from the front entrance, a second should be coming in by the back door. The more clients we get, the greater are our earnings. Now that young fellow Li Kan-hsien has been coming here continually for more than a year, and not only are we getting no new clients, but we have lost all our old ones. It is as though you had been entertaining

Chung K'uei Lao,⁶ and no young devils, not even unimportant ones, will come to our door. Owing to this young Li, I see human breath in the air, but no smoke upon the hearth. What do you propose to do to remedy this matter ? "

" You speak as though Mr. Li had come here with empty hands," the girl replied, for she was not one to submit lightly to abuse. " He has spent large sums here."

" That was a long time since," answered the woman ; " but how much does he give now ? Let me see what you can get out of him to-day to hand over to me for the purchase of rice and fuel for you both. To other establishments their girls are a money tree which needs only to be shaken when funds are needed. But I have had, it seems, the ill-fortune to have brought up a white tiger,⁷ that keeps the money from my doors. The seven necessities⁸ for our daily use are now provided by me, and all because you, vile little creature that you are, insist on keeping this miserable pauper here ! Where do you think that all our food and clothes are coming from ? Just you tell him that if there is any good in him at all he must earn some money for me, and then you can go off with him altogether if you want to, and I will buy another girl and try to get along on her earnings. Then each one of us will be suited."⁹

" Do you really mean what you say ? " asked Decima.

" I mean every word of it," answered the old woman, who, knowing that Mr. Li had not a cash and had already pawned all his clothes, did not think that it would be possible for him to raise any more money. " And I will abide by my words."

" How much money do you want for me, then ? " asked the girl.

" If it were anyone else, I would ask a thousand taels," was the reply. " But I will take pity on a poor wretch like that, and will only ask him three hundred. I could get some proper girl for that sum to take your place. But there is one

⁶ Chung K'uei Lao. An imaginary being, supposed to be able to avert evil spirits from a house. Pictures of him are pasted at the entrance to houses at the New Year. He corresponds to the Japanese Shokei, who figures frequently in the art of that country. Here, " devil " is used in a double sense.

⁷ White Tiger is the name of a star which brings ill-luck. Corresponding to this star, according to the " science " of Feng Shui or geomancy, are the subterranean currents which must be avoided in the selection of a site—e.g., for a house.

⁸ The " seven necessities " of daily life are : Rice, Fuel, Oil, Salt, Soy, Vinegar and Tea.

thing : I must have the money within three days, and if he comes then with it, I will hand you over on the spot. If he does not come with the money in that time, I will turn him out ! Out of the house he goes, the rascal, and no one could blame me ! ”

“ But he is not of this province and has no money of his own,” urged Decima. “ He may be able to raise three hundred taels, but three days is a very short time ; please let him have ten days to find the money ! ”⁹

“ The young fool has nothing but his bare hands,” thought the old woman, “ and could not get the money if I gave him a hundred days. If he cannot get it, he cannot come back, be the skin of his face never so thick ! And when I am finally quit of him, I can set up my establishment again, and the girl will not have a word to say.”

“ Well, to humour you,” she said aloud, “ I will give him ten days. But if he does not come with the money on the tenth day, I will really put a stop to this nonsense.”

“ If he does not get it in ten days,” said Decima, “ I think that he will not dare to come any more. The only thing that I fear is that if he does get the money, you will go back on your bargain ! ”

“ I am an old woman of fifty-one years,” was the answer, “ for I have always prayed to the Great Bear in fasting.¹⁰ How then could I dare to be false to my word ? If you doubt me, I will swear it to you, palm against palm,¹¹ and if I prove false to my word, may I be reborn again as a dog or a sow ! ”

III

That evening Decima took counsel with her lover and told him of her plan for obtaining her freedom and throwing in her lot with his.

⁹ Borrowing money. This is a universal custom in China. Often enough among friends no interest is charged, and, though repayment is usually made, genuine inability to pay excuses liability. In business, however, high rates of interest are charged, 2 per cent. a month being the common rate.

¹⁰ Praying to the Great Bear ensures longevity. An elderly person, being nearer to the account which must be rendered at death, is theoretically less likely to tell lies than a younger one.

¹¹ Palm to Palm. Formerly a common gesture on making a verbal agreement, one party placing the palm of his right hand against the palm of the other's left. Possibly evidence of no concealed weapon and therefore of good faith.

"That indeed would be to fulfil my most ardent wish," said Mr. Li. "But to redeem a courtesan is a most costly undertaking, requiring at least a thousand taels. My purse is as empty as though it had been washed clean. How, then, can it be managed?"

"I have already struck the bargain with my mistress," answered Decima. "She wants but three hundred taels for me, and this sum must be produced within ten days. It is true that you have come to the end of your allowances, but you have friends here from whom you could borrow that sum, and if you can obtain the money thus I shall be yours for ever and shall be free, once and for all, from that old woman and her cruelties."

"Of my friends here, there is no longer one who will have any more to do with me by reason of my so long remaining in this place," answered Mr. Li. "But to-morrow I will pack up everything that I have, as though for my journey back to my home, and will go round to the house of each of my acquaintances, and from each I will ask for a loan to meet my expenses on the way. And the sums that I shall be able to raise will, may be, amount to the required sum." So next day he rose, and, after making a careful toilet, took his leave of Decima and went out.

"I shall be waiting here anxiously for your return with good news," she said, "so be as quick as you can."

There was no need to tell Mr. Li that, and he went out at once and called at the house of each one of his friends, pretending that he had come to say good-bye before going back to his home. That he was returning home they were all glad enough to hear, but when he went on to say that he had no money to pay his way and desired to borrow a small sum for the journey, they all looked askance.

The proverb says, "To speak of a loan is to put an end to friendship," and no one was found willing to lend. They all, very rightly, considered Mr. Li as a dissolute young fellow, who was infatuated by a courtesan; they knew that he had been away from home for a whole year and that his father was sick with anger at his ways, and they doubted very much his professions of anxiety to leave. "If he gets hold of this money which he says he needs to take him home," they thought, "it is more than likely that it will be spent, not on travelling, but on face powder and cosmetics. And when his father hears of it

he will find fault with us and will say that our intentions, which are really benevolent, were in effect evil. It will be better, therefore, to refuse altogether."

"To-day I happen not to have any money in the house," was the reply that he received from each in turn, "and I fear that I cannot therefore help you. How great is my shame at my inability to assist!"

All spoke in the same way, there being found not one generous person ready to lend even ten or twenty taels, so that Mr. Li, after spending three days in making his calls, had not succeeded in raising a single cash. He did not dare to go back to Decima and put her off with any evasive statement, and when the fourth day had produced no good result he forebore to return for very shame. But he had no other dwelling-place, and, having nowhere else to spend the night, he went back to his friend Liu and begged a bed of him.

The latter saw that Mr. Li was in a very despondent mood so he asked the reason, whereupon Mr. Li related the true story of Decima and how she was ready to throw in her lot with him. Mr. Liu, however, shook his head. "I do not place much reliance on such professions," he said. "That girl, Decima, is the most famous courtesan in all the quarter, and to redeem her to virtue would cost ten caskets of pearls and a thousand taels of silver. The old woman would never really let her go for so small a sum as three hundred taels, and she only says that because she thinks that you have no money at all. This talk of going away with you and of the ten days' limit is all a plan for deceiving you, for they know that, if you cannot raise the money within that time, you will not have the face to go back without it, while, if you do raise the money, they will take it from you and then laugh at you. You will then lose so much face that you will not be able to return anyhow. That is the kind of trick that such people always play. I beg of you to be guided by me and do not let yourself be deceived by them. You had much better leave this girl at once and make up your mind to have nothing more to do with her."

On hearing this, Mr. Li sat silently, thinking, and spoke no word.

"I do not wish you to mistake my true meaning," went on Mr. Liu, "and, if you really wish to return home and really have no money, I might manage to raise some for you. But, if you insist on having three hundred taels, you will not get it in

ten months, much less ten days, for nowadays people do not take very much interest in the troubles of others. But you may depend upon it that the girl knows well enough that you will never be able to raise the money, and is party to the trick for getting rid of you."

"Yes, I suppose that you are right after all, my good brother," said Mr. Li at length. But yet he was by no means satisfied in his own mind, and he went out again to try to borrow money. At nightfall he again did not return to the brothel, but went once more to Mr. Liu's house, and there he lived for two more days until six days of his time limit had sped by.

Meantime Decima had become very anxious, and sent out the little slave boy who attended her into the streets to look for her lover. The lad looked up and down the main streets, and at length by good fortune encountered Mr. Li. "Mr. Li, Mr. Li," he cried. "My mistress is waiting for you at home. Come back at once!"

Mr. Li felt that he would lose face by going without the money, so he said that he had no time to go that day but would do so the next. The lad, however, had received Decima's order, and hung on to him as though he would die rather than let him go. "She told me to bring you back with me," he said, "and you must come back with me, if only for a moment."

So the young man, who was of course always longing to see his lady again, had perforce to follow the slave back. But when he encountered Decima, he sat down without saying a word.

She asked him what he had accomplished, but his eyes filled with tears and he did not reply.

"Men's hearts are hard and cruel," said she. "Could you not even raise three hundred taels?"

"I do not know how easily one could catch a tiger among the mountains," he replied, quoting the proverb, "but I do know that it is hard to borrow money of a friend. Six days have passed," he went on through his tears, "and I have raised no money at all. I was ashamed to come back to you with empty hands, so I did not dare to come back at all. But I got your order to-day and thus I am here, overcome by shame as I am. I have tried my best to get the money, but people have been too hard."

"Well, do not let the old woman know," said Decima, "but stay here till to-morrow, for I have something else to tell you."

And so saying she placed food and wine before him. After

eating he went to bed and slept till midnight, when Decima woke him.

"If you, sir, cannot get this money, what is to become of me?" she asked. But Mr. Li could only weep and had no word to say. Then, later, as the dawn appeared, Decima woke him again.

"Inside the coverlet of my bed," she whispered to him, "there is hidden a sum of 150 taels in silver. This sum I have accumulated and concealed little by little. If you take it, you have already one half of the total sum. The other half you must get somehow in the four days that still remain. So take the coverlet now and do not delay further."

So saying, she rose and handed over the coverlet. Mr. Li told the slave boy to roll it up and to follow him out with it; then they went together to the house of Mr. Liu, to whom Mr. Li related this last experience. The two opened the coverlet and in the cotton which it contained they found concealed countless small pieces of silver all sewn in. These they put together and weighed, and the whole amounted to just 150 taels.¹²

"This girl of yours must really be in earnest after all," said Mr. Liu in amazement. "She must indeed be in love with you. You cannot therefore refuse her, and I will now help you out of your difficulty."

"If I can indeed obtain your assistance, sir," said Mr. Li, "I will be your debtor for evermore."

IV

So Mr. Liu kept his friend in his house and went round himself to all his acquaintances. In two days he had succeeded in borrowing 150 taels, which he handed over to Mr. Li.

"I have got together this money for you," he said, "not so much on your behalf as because I am moved at Miss Decima's devotion to you."

So Mr. Li took the 300 taels as a heaven-sent gift and went off to see his lady, his face suffused with smiles, for it was the ninth day and his limit of time was not yet overpast.

¹² 150 taels would weigh about 12 lb. avoirdupois. The kind of coverlet indicated here is a thick double quilt of heavy cotton cloth stuffed with cotton. It is quite conceivable that small pieces of silver aggregating 12 lb. could be sewn in such a quilt without necessarily exciting suspicion.

"Hitherto you have not succeeded in raising a single cash," said Decima when she saw the money. "How have you now managed to get 150 taels in so short a time?" And when Mr. Li explained to her what his friend had said, she placed her hands together and pressed them to her forehead in thankfulness to heaven.

"That we have received this favour in accordance with the desire of both of us," she said, "is due solely to Mr. Liu's efforts, and our joy is greater than heaven and earth."

Next morning Decima rose early, and proposed to Mr. Li that they should pay the money over at once. "I can then go away with you immediately," she added. "But there is the matter of our travelling expenses to be considered. Yesterday I went to see some of my sisters and from them I borrowed twenty taels. This please take, for it will help us on our way." Mr. Li gladly did so, for he had thought on the subject with alarm. And while they were talking, the old woman came and knocked on the door. "Now then, miss," she cried, "to-day is the tenth day!" and Mr. Li opened the door and asked her to come in.

"I am beholden to you for your kindness, madam," he said. "I was in fact just about to call you." And, so saying, he laid the 800 taels down on the table before her.

She had never thought for a moment that Mr. Li would ever be able to find the money, and she changed countenance at the sight of it and said never a word.

Seeing that she appeared to be regretting her bargain, Decima then addressed her. "I have been many years under your roof," she said, "and the money that I must have made for you amounts, without a doubt, to many thousands of taels. That I am reforming to-day is the result of your kind promises to me. Here is the 800 taels paid up in full and the time limit has not yet passed. If you now fail in your promise and do not allow me to go, Mr. Li will take all this money away again and I shall commit suicide. Thus you will lose not only the money, but myself also, and you will be sorry!"

To this the old woman did not at first reply, but after long thought she rose and fetched a balance. "Well, well," she said at last when she had weighed the silver and found it correct, "I suppose I must not keep you. But, if you want to go, go at once; and mind that you take not one single garment with you except the clothes which you wear." And so saying she

thrust Mr. Li and the girl out of the room and came out with them, locking the door after them.

It was then already autumn. Miss Decima had just risen from her bed and had not yet performed her toilet. She was clad only in old garments. She kotowed twice to the mistress, and after Mr. Li also had made a parting salutation, he and his lady at length left the old woman's door.

The fish ejects the cruel hook and swims away,
With a shake of the head and a flirt of the tail, nevermore to return.

V

Mr. Li proposed that Decima should go at once in a sedan chair to Mr. Liu's house and there think over their plans, but to this she demurred.

"I was on the best of terms with all my sisters," she said, "and I must first of all go and say good-bye to them. Moreover, they were kind enough to lend us that sum of twenty taels, and I must go and thank them for that." So she went round with Mr. Li to all the houses to express her thanks, especially to two girls called Moonlight and Simplicity, who lived nearby and were her chief friends. She went first to the house where Moonlight lived, and when the latter saw her dressed so plainly and with no hair ornaments she asked what was the matter. Decima told her what had happened and introduced Mr. Li, to whom she said: "The sum which I borrowed the other day for our assistance was handed to me by this lady, to whom, sir, your thanks are in consequence now due."

Mr. Li made a profound salutation, and Moonlight, after telling Decima to make her toilet in her room, went to interview Simplicity; and before Decima had finished the two others brought over some jade hair ornaments and gold pins, carved combs, and jewelled ear-rings, embroidered sleeve-pieces, a decorated petticoat, a wondrous belt embroidered with emblematic birds, and a pair of brocade shoes. These were freely given, and soon Decima was arrayed in finery from head to foot.

Food and wine were then set out for a congratulatory feast, and Moonlight gave up her room to her guests for the night.

Next day a further feast was prepared; all the courtesans were asked, no friend of Decima's being absent, and all drank to

the health of the happy pair. Thereafter there were music, and singing and dancing, each performer doing her best to give the guests pleasure. They sat together until midnight and Decima thanked each in turn, but they said as she was chief of them all and was about to leave the capital for ever with her lover, they would all come to see her start the next day.

"Decima is going on a very long journey with her master," said Moonlight to the rest, "and her resources are very limited, whereby inconvenience may result. This must be our affair, so let us take counsel together, for we must not allow her to suffer from want upon the way."

This speech was applauded by all the girls, and the party then broke up, Mr. Li and Decima retiring to pass the rest of the night in Moonlight's room.

As daylight broke, Decima asked Mr. Li if he had made any plan as to their departure.

"My father," answered Mr. Li, "is already very angry with me, and when he hears that I am returning with a concubine from this quarter of the city, I fear that he might take some step which would cause you to lose face. For this I alone would be responsible; I have not yet thought what it would be best to do."

"That a father should be on bad terms with his son and should refuse to see him," said Decima, "is by no means in accordance with what is right. It is no use for you to go straight home with me and to explain matters to him; let us rather go to Hangchow or Soochow and stay there for a while. You can then go on alone and can beg your relations and friends to intercede for you with your father. Having made your peace with him you can then come and fetch me, and all will be well."

Mr. Li agreed that her plan was a good one, and next day they left together. After taking leave of Moonlight they repaired to Mr. Liu's house to get ready their baggage, and when Decima saw Mr. Liu she kotowed before him and expressed her thanks for his assistance, saying that a day would surely come when she and her master would be able to repay their debt.

"You are very devoted to him, are you not?" asked Mr. Liu when he had returned her salutation. "For it is obvious that you did not cease to care for him when he had lost all his money. This proves you to be a heroine among women. As

for me, I merely blew upon the fire to keep it alight, there is no need to speak of so small a service."

That evening the three dined together, and next morning an auspicious day was fixed for their departure and chairs and beasts were ordered. Decima also sent her slave boy with a letter of farewell to Moonlight.

When the day fixed for their departure arrived, a procession of sedan chairs was seen approaching just as they were about to set forth, for Moonlight and Simplicity had come as they promised with the rest to see them start.

"You, Decima," said Moonlight when the girls had all alighted, "are going off with your master for a journey of a thousand li and more, despite the fact that your resources are but slender. We, therefore, being unable to forget our love for you, have to-day prepared a small gift which we unite in giving you. Please cast your eyes upon it and accept it. If you are without other resources by the way, it may afford you some slight assistance."

So saying, she motioned to a porter who had come with her, and he showed a square box such as is used to carry writing materials. It was decorated with gilded carvings and appeared to be of great weight. It was, however, locked, and Decima did not open it to see what was within but accepted it graciously and thanked her friends for their kindness. Shortly afterwards the chairs and beasts which they had ordered arrived and the attendants exhorted the pair to start. Mr. Li drank three cups of wine in farewell and the two then set forth, the girls accompanying them to the Hata Gate of the city, where with many tears a last farewell was said.

VI

In due course Mr. Li arrived with Decima at Tungchow,¹³ where they left the road and took to the river. Luckily they happened to fall in with a grain-junk from the Yangtze which

¹³ In former days the normal route, except in the depth of winter, from Peking to the south was eastwards to Tungchow by road, then by river (the Pei Ho) to Tientsin and then by the Grand Canal across the Yellow River and the Yangtze to Chinkiang, Soochow and Hangchow. Lord Macartney's mission to China in 1795 followed this route and prolonged it up the Ch'ien T'ang River at Hangchow, over the divide into Kiangse province and thence via the Poyang Lake and two other rivers to Canton, a total journey by water of about 1600 miles.

was just returning with passengers, and, after fixing the amount of their fare, Mr. Li had their luggage put into the hold. But as he stepped on board, he found that he had not a cash left in his purse, for although Decima had given him twenty taels he had not been able to help going to the pawnshops and redeeming some of the garments which he had pledged in the past, for those that he had left were all torn and old. He also bought some bedding, so that what he had left had only sufficed for the hire of the chairs and the beasts for the journey to Tungchow.

"Do not be sad," said Decima when she saw his perplexity. "The gift that my friends made will probably help us." And she took the key and opened the box, while Mr. Li stood shame-facedly at one side not daring to look into the box to see what it contained. Decima brought out a bag of red silk, and, placing it on the deck, told him to open it and look.

The bag seemed very heavy as he raised it, and when he looked inside he found it full of pieces of silver, weighing, as he thought, about fifty taels. Decima, who had meanwhile locked up the box again, did not say what else was inside.

"How generous it was of the others to give us this," she said. "Not only have we here quite enough for the journey, but enough to keep us for a while at Soochow or Hangchow, where we shall be able to make a few expeditions to see the famous places of beauty in the neighbourhood."

Mr. Li was both surprised and pleased. "If I had not met you," he said, "I should have died in poverty in Peking and would never have had even a decent burial. Such virtue and kindness I shall never forget until my dying day."

And from that time forth, whenever they conversed of the past, Mr. Li was so conscious of Decima's goodness that his tears fell incessantly, but she always comforted him.

Thus they travelled, and, meeting with no incident on the way, they reached at length the Great River and moored at the mouth of the Canal, where Mr. Li obtained a passage on a trading junk. He carried over their baggage, and it was arranged to cross the river on the following day. It was then the middle of the tenth moon month of the year, and the full moon shed her silver beams upon them.

"Since we left Peking," said Mr. Li to Decima, as they sat together in the bows of the junk, "we have been shut up together in the common cabin surrounded by other passengers

and have had no opportunity to talk privately together. Now that we are alone on a junk to ourselves we need have no fear ; moreover we have left the north and are approaching Kiangnan. Let us therefore drink together in celebration of our arrival and thus dispel the sadness that has settled upon us."

"I have been a stranger to laughter for a long time," she replied, "and I am fully of your mind." So Mr. Li got out all the utensils, the wine and the food, and, setting them in order in the bow, he placed a mat on the deck for Decima and himself. Then, seating themselves, they filled one another's wine cups and drank until both were under the spell of the wine, when Mr. Li raised his cup to his lady.

"You, my dear one," he said, "have a wonderful voice, and were ever the best singer of the quarter. The first time that I saw you I heard you sing in the most delicious manner so that I was bereft of my reason. Afterwards, when difficulties beset us and I was overtaken by despair, you sang like a chorus of celestial birds ; but I have not heard you sing for many days. To-night the river sparkles in the moonlight. It is midnight and no one is by. I pray you to sing to me now."

Decima was overjoyed to do so, and she opened her throat and sang, keeping time by tapping upon the deck with her fan. The verse which she sang was one composed by Shih Chün-mei of the Yüan dynasty, and was taken from the book of plays entitled *The Pavilion whence one Greets the Moon*. The verse was called "The Scholar Pours Wine for the Beautiful Damsel," and was sung in the measure known as "The Pink Peach-bloom."

Her song reached Heaven ; the clouds stood still, attentive to the sound.

The very fishes of the deep in ecstasy swam round.

VII

Now there happened to be moored near by another junk, on which there was a single passenger, a young man named Sun Shan-lai, who came from Hsü An Hsien in the Huichow prefecture. His family was a wealthy one, for his forefathers had been salt merchants in Yangchow for many generations. Mr. Sun was also a member of the Imperial Academy, and was

about twenty years of age, a dissolute young man who often visited the brothel quarter in the capital to buy a smile and find delight among the painted faces. He was indeed ever foremost in any youthful company to sport with the wind and play with the moon.

And while Mr. Li and his lady were anchored at the mouth of the Canal, young Mr. Sun sat drinking in solitude upon his junk, and when he heard a woman's voice raised in song the music seemed to him to be more entrancing than that emitted by any celestial bird. So he stood up on the prow of his junk and listened until he had identified the boat from which the sounds came. He was just about to make inquiry of his crew when the song ceased and he heard no more, so he sent out a servant to investigate, and in due course word was brought back to him that the boat in question had been hired by a Mr. Li but that the name of the singer was unknown.

"She must, in any case, be a girl of common origin,"¹⁴ said Mr. Sun to himself. "How can I manage to get to know her?" And so great was his anxiety that he slept not at all that night.

At about the fifth watch a great wind arose and at dawn inky clouds filled the sky. Soon a snow-storm was raging, the like of which he had never seen before.

The crows no longer round the hill-tops float,
All human tracks are blotted out below;
But one old man within his tiny boat,
In bamboo hat and quickly whitening coat,
All huddled up, still fishes through the snow.¹⁵

The storm prevented any junk from crossing the river, and all remained at anchor except that of Mr. Sun, for he told his junkmen to get up anchor and to moor alongside Mr. Li's boat. When this had been done, Mr. Sun put on his sable-skin hat and his best fur coat and gazed out of the window of his boat, pretending to be watching the falling snow. Thus he

¹⁴ A girl of common origin. In the Far East, singing and dancing are almost exclusively professional arts.

¹⁵ This verse is by a poet and calligraphist of the T'ang dynasty named Liu Tsung-yuan (773-819). A pronounced Buddhist, he wrote an essay in defence of that religion, in which he said (Giles' translation): "Buddhism admits of no envious rivalry for place or power. The majority of its adherents love only to lead a simple life of contemplation amid the charms of hill and stream. And when I turn my gaze towards the turmoil of the age in its daily race for the seals and tassels of office, I ask myself if I am to reject those in order to take my place among the ranks of these."

succeeded in catching a glimpse of Decima, for, just after she had completed her toilet, she raised the blind of her window for a moment with one jade-like hand while she emptied the water from her basin into the river.

Mr. Sun observed at once her peerless beauty, saw what a lovely creature she was, that her charms were such as would ruin a state, that her fragrance was of a more than earthly description. His head swam and his senses were reft from him at the sight, while his eyes remained staring at the window where he had seen her. He waited long in the hope of seeing her once more, but she did not show herself again. He thought of her all day, and at last, opening his own window, he raised his voice and sang the first two lines of the song called "The Plum Blossom," by Kao the Hanlin scholar :¹⁶

The Hermit of the Hill sleeps on ; the snowflakes fall ;
The Maiden wanders through the moonlit trees. . . .

Mr. Li, hearing the song, opened the door of his cabin and looked out to see whence the sound came, thus doing just what Mr. Sun desired, for it was his wish to attract the attention of the unknown damsel's escort and draw him into conversation. As soon, therefore, as he saw Mr. Li, he very politely inquired as to his name and antecedents. Mr. Li replied suitably and asked similar questions of the other. The two then exchanged views about the Imperial Academy and by degrees became quite friendly.

"It would appear that this storm which has stopped our junks," said Mr. Sun after they had conversed for some time, "has been specially decreed by Heaven in order that we should meet, sir. That is indeed good fortune for me. But it is tedious upon these junks. Let us rather go on shore and find a wine shop where we may drink together, thus passing the time while I am able to benefit by the advantage of your conversation. I beg of you not to refuse this."

"As we have met as fortuitously as two fragments of duck-weed that come together upon a flowing stream," replied Mr. Li, "I feel that I can hardly venture to accept your proffered kindness."

¹⁶ Possibly Kao Ch'an of the T'ang dynasty. On failing at the first attempt to take his Chin Shih degree, he consoled himself by writing some verses, in which he pointed out that the beautiful hibiscus blooms late, when the peach and the almond blossoms are over. He passed successfully on a later attempt.

"But there," said the other, "you are evidently not speaking with your accustomed wisdom, for is it not so that all within the four seas are brothers?" And so saying he ordered his men to place the gang-plank in position and told a lad to go across to the other junk with an umbrella and escort Mr. Li across. At the bow he met the latter with a salute and ushered him on board his own boat with every mark of politeness. Thus they went on shore together.

They walked in company for a short distance, and then, encountering a wine shop, they entered and went upstairs. They chose a clean table near the window, where they sat down and the host placed wine and food before them. Mr. Sun pledged his guest and the two sat drinking and looking out over the snow. First they spoke of literary matters and exchanged polite inquiries, but at length Mr. Sun brought the conversation round to the subject of the gay quarter of the capital, a matter in which both were experienced. They exchanged views and became very confidential one to another. Mr. Sun then told his retainers, who had accompanied him from the boat, to remove themselves beyond earshot.

"Please tell me," he whispered to Mr. Li when they were alone, "who it was that was singing yesterday upon your junk?"

"That was Decima, the famous courtesan from Peking," replied Mr. Li proudly, for he was only too ready to boast of his conquest.

"But she is the most renowned of all the singing girls of the capital," said the other. "How comes it that she is now with you here?"

Mr. Li then related his story, telling how he had met Decima, how they had fallen in love with one another, and finally how he had managed to raise the money to redeem her and had carried her off.

"A wonderful tale indeed," said Mr. Sun when he had heard Mr. Li to the end. "You are thus taking back to your home a very famous beauty, and you must indeed be proud of her. But what about your honoured family? Will they receive her fittingly, do you think?"

"About my wife, it does not matter," replied Mr. Li. "But I am certainly alarmed as to what my old father will do. For he is a hot-tempered man, and I fear that I may have some trouble with him."

This was just what Mr. Sun was waiting for. "If you think that your father will not receive her," he said, "where will you put her? Have you thought out any definite plan with her?"

"We have, of course, discussed the matter," replied Mr. Li, screwing up his brows in perplexity.

"And she, no doubt, had an excellent plan all ready?" prompted Mr. Sun in glee.

"To tell you the truth, sir," answered Mr. Li, "she proposed that we might go and stay somewhere for a time in Soochow or Hangchow, and spend some time in making expeditions to divert ourselves with the scenery. Then, I thought, I might go home alone and make my peace with my father through the intermediary of my friends, and, after he has forgotten his anger and is placated, she thought that she might come and join me. Do you not think that such a plan would serve?"

Mr. Sun sat for some moments silent, pretending to be very concerned. "This is the first time that I have met you," he said at length, "and it is ever difficult to talk confidentially with a new acquaintance. I fear that if I say what is in my mind you may be offended."

"Nevertheless, I beg of you to speak quite frankly, sir," replied Mr. Li, "and to put away all reticence."

"In that case, sir," said Mr. Sun, "I would remind you that your father is a very high official, and will therefore by no means countenance anything which might be criticised as unfitting in this matter. You tell me that he took great offence when he heard that you were frequenting resorts that might be considered unseemly. Will he, then, easily forgive you when he learns that you have returned home with one who in the past has been lacking in chastity? Moreover, all your honoured friends and relations will, without exception, take your exalted father's view of this matter. It will be in vain for you to supplicate them, for they will have no sympathy for you, and even if there be found one who should be ignorant of your father's attitude and should go in to speak with him on your behalf, he would, when he saw that your father was not inclined to agree, be forced to change his tone and to side with your father. You will never be able to go back in peace, and you will be equally unable to face your lady again. You can, of course, as you suggest, spend some time in diverting yourselves

with scenery, but that cannot go on for ever, and you will soon come to an end of your money, and then you will find yourself in greater difficulties than ever."

Mr. Li knew that he had only had fifty taels altogether, of which more than half was already expended, so on hearing this last argument he was forced to nod his head in agreement.

"Now, I have a suggestion to make," went on Mr. Sun, "but I feel very diffident about expressing it, and I do not for a moment suppose that you will approve of what I propose."

"Please say on, sir," replied Mr. Li, "and accept in advance my gratitude for your help."

"I am, of course, the merest acquaintance, and I am very far from wishing to say anything to estrange you from one who is dear to you," said Mr. Sun. "So perhaps, after all, I had better not say what I had intended to say!"

"In any case, let me hear it," urged Mr. Li.

"Well," said Mr. Sun after further hesitation, "the old proverb says 'A woman is ever unstable as water.' Furthermore, these 'Flowers of the Mist' are nearly always false-hearted. Your lady was the most celebrated of all the courtesans of the quarter and is, without doubt, well known to a large number of young men. Here in the south there are certain to be many of her former lovers, and I strongly suspect that she has come here, by means of your efforts, in order to resume relations with some of them and intends to leave you."

"But that," exclaimed Mr. Li emphatically, "is most certainly not the case!"

"Well, you may of course be right," replied Mr. Sun. "But the young men of Chiang Nan are notoriously lax in their morals, and when you leave so beautiful a girl alone in the house, it will be difficult to guarantee that no adjoining walls will be broken through. If, on the other hand, you take her with you, your father will be all the more incensed against you."

"Now, although I do not think that my proposal is a completely satisfactory one, I will tell it to you. The most important consideration is that you should establish good relations with your father. If you fall out with him over a concubine, or cleave to a courtesan rather than to your own wife and kin, you will be considered by all as a wastrel and a virtueless person. Your wife will not regard you as one worthy

to be her husband, your younger brothers will not look up to you as their elder, your friends will have nothing to do with you, and you will be cut off finally from everything. To all this you must pay good heed."

When Mr. Li heard these words it was as though he had suddenly awakened to the falsity of his position.

"And, in your exalted opinion," he said, moving his seat nearer to that of his adviser, "what, then, should I do?"

"My proposal is one which will be of the greatest help to you," was the reply. "But I fear that you are so overwhelmed with affection that you will not listen to me, and that my words will be wasted."

"If indeed you have some advice for me which will enable me to return home in peace and in joy," said Mr. Li, "I shall regard you as my benefactor to the end of my days. So speak on without fear."

"You, sir, have been absent from home for more than a year," said the crafty Sun, "much to the anger of your father. Your wife is also, without doubt, much perturbed in her mind about you. If I were in your place, I would certainly not be able to eat or to sleep for anxiety. Your father is evidently very angry with you, not only for being infatuated with a courtesan, but also for regarding his money as of no more value than so much dirt, so he doubtless thinks that you will never be fit to inherit and look after his property. You now propose to return without a cash, and when he sees you thus his rage will burst forth. But if you can bring yourself to part with this girl, and to make the best of a bad business, I will give you a thousand taels for her. You can then go back to your father with this large sum and can say that you have been acting as tutor all this time in the capital and have never recklessly expended any of his money. It is quite likely that you will be able to make him believe you, and your re-entry into your family will be made easy. Thus in a short time your misfortunes will be turned to happiness. Think over my offer, sir. I am not animated by any spirit of covetousness with regard to the girl, but solely by sympathy with the hardness of your lot!"

Mr. Li who was, as will have been seen, a man of very little strength of character, was so terrified of his father that Mr. Sun's advice made a great impression upon him. So he rose and made a salutation to his friend.

"When I hear your words, sir," he said, "it is as though a mass of obstructing reeds had suddenly been cleared away from the clear waters of my mind. But the young lady has now accompanied me for a thousand li, and it would hardly be in accordance with the dictates of correct behaviour to dispose of her with so little ceremony. Allow me, I beg of you, to go back and consult with her. If I obtain her consent to your proposal, I will come back again and speak further."

"Pray do so," answered Mr. Sun. "But when you mention the matter to her, you must approach it by oblique methods. She is, however, no doubt so attached to you that she will not willingly cause a permanent disagreement between your father and yourself, and it is very likely that she will help to enable you to return creditably to your family."

The two then sat on together and drank further, then the storm abated as the dusk came down. Mr. Sun told his servants to settle his reckoning, and the two returned hand in hand to the landing place.

To pour out your heart to a stranger is a foolish proceeding
at best;

If you must say a word, tell him only one-third, and keep to
yourself all the rest!

VIII

Meanwhile Decima had early prepared a meal of fruit and wine on the junk for her lover's delectation, but he did not come back all day. She lit the lamps as dusk came on, and sat waiting for him until at length he came on board.

When she went outside to welcome him, she saw that he was very flustered and ill at ease, as though he had something unpleasant upon his mind, so she poured out some hot wine for him and urged him to drink. He shook his head, however, and, speaking never a word, went straight to bed. Decima was very disturbed by this behaviour, but cleared the table and helped him to his couch.

"What has happened?" she asked him at length. "Why are you so agitated?" But the only answer she received was a deep sigh. Again and again she questioned him, but Mr. Li dropped off to sleep without giving her any answer, and she

remained sitting at the head of the bed and watched over him, not being able to sleep herself.

About midnight she heard him wake up and sigh again heavily. "What have you on your mind which makes you sigh so much, and of which you cannot speak?" she asked. And at last Mr. Li sat up in bed, drawing the coverlet round him. He tried to speak several times, but failed, his tears falling fast, so Decima put her arms round him and pressed him to her heart, trying to comfort him.

"We have loved each other dearly for nearly two years," she said, "and have lived together through a thousand hardships and difficulties. We have overcome endless obstacles in our journey hither, and you have expressed no regret. To-day, when we are about to cross the river and settle down together for a long life of united bliss, how is it that you are suddenly overcome with bitter sadness? What can be the reason? Let us make up our minds to live together or to die together as husband and wife. If there is any fresh difficulty, let us talk it over together, for the worst course is to keep a grief to oneself." This she spoke until he perforce restrained his weeping.

"I was a pauper in a far place," he said at last, "and you did not turn your back on me but, on the contrary, you devised a way for our escape. You have behaved towards me with the utmost virtue and honour; that is understood. But I have to-day been turning the whole matter over in my mind, and this is what I think. My father is a high official of very great austerity, who may be relied upon to obey to the letter the dictates of propriety. Strict and stern is he by nature, and I would fear to do anything which would add to his anger. I dread most of all that he should drive us out in disgrace and cause us to become wanderers until the end of our days. It would then be difficult to count upon any measure of conjugal happiness for us, and in addition the relations between father and son would be completely severed. Yesterday I made friends with the man on yonder junk. He is a Mr. Sun from Hsü An. He asked me to drink with him and we talked this matter over together—and it was as though he had plunged a knife into my heart!"

"What, then, did you decide, sir?" asked Decima in alarm.

"I, who am the one chiefly concerned in this matter, have not been able to see so clearly as one who is not himself involved,"

replied Mr. Li. " My friend, Mr. Sun, has devised a plan which is very satisfactory for me ; but I fear, dear one, that it will not be agreeable to you."

" Who is this one that you call your friend ? " she asked. " As to his plan, I would agree to anything that would solve our difficulties."

" His name is Sun Shan-lai," was the reply, " and he is a salt merchant from Hsü An, and also a brilliant young scholar. He heard you singing last night and he asked me who you were. I related to him all about our affairs and told him about the difficulty I had in going home. He then expressed his willingness to take you for himself and said that he would pay me a thousand taels for you, pointing out that if I returned home with so large a sum of money and said that I had obtained it by industry in the capital, I could easily obtain my father's approbation thereby. You also would be well provided for. But I could not bear the thought of letting you go, and therefore I was weeping."

He ceased speaking with another flood of tears, and Decima, when she had heard him out, released him from her embrace.

" He who thought out such a plan for you," she cried scornfully, " must be a noble gentleman indeed ! You, sir, will be repaid for your former outlay and need not be longer troubled with me on your journey, and I shall become the property of another ! What an unselfish man he must be, and how high principled ! Moreover, both of us will benefit so thoroughly from his kindness. And has he already handed over to you the thousand taels ? Have you got the money safe ? "

" You, my dear one, had not approved of this proposal," replied Mr. Li, who had stopped weeping. " He therefore did not give me the silver, but has it still."

" When morning comes go quickly and strike this bargain, then," she cried. " Do not let slip so good an opportunity ! But a thousand taels is no trifling sum. See that the silver is properly weighed out and handed over to you before I go over to his junk. See to it that he tries no huckster's trick upon you ! "

And so saying, she lit the lamp and began at once to make her toilet, it being then the fourth watch of the night. " I must make myself look more than usually attractive this day," she said, " for I must usher out the parting guest and welcome in the new one ! "

Thus she began applying the rouge and the powder and the scented oil, embellishing herself with the greatest care. She put in her prettiest hair-combs and donned a beautiful embroidered coat, arraying herself in her most becoming style. And as she moved she emitted waves of fragrance—indeed a veritable lure for men.

Then, when her toilet was at last complete, and as dawn was just beginning to break, Mr. Sun sent across a servant to ask if Mr. Li had made up his mind. Decima shot one earnest glance at her lover, and, seeing on his face a look of pleasure and satisfaction, told him to hurry off and give his answer, weighing the money well. So Mr. Li went over to the other boat and gave his formal consent.

"To hand over the money will be easy enough," said Mr. Sun to him, "but before I do so I must have a pledge, say the lady's toilet case, that you are in earnest."

Mr. Li went back to Decima, who pointed at the decorated box which had been given to her when she left the capital, saying briefly that he could take that.

Sun, on receiving the box, was overjoyed and promptly sent the thousand taels over to the other boat. Decima looked the silver over and made certain that it sufficed both in weight and in fineness, not the value of a hair being deficient. Then she put her hand through the window of the junk and beckoned to Mr. Sun, who felt as though bereft of his senses as she opened her red lips and displayed her pearly teeth, saying to him: "Please return that box to me for a moment. Within it I have placed Mr. Li's permit to travel, and I would give it back to him."

Mr. Sun already looked upon Decima as a captive tortoise in an earthen jar, so he sent his servant at once to carry back the box to her.

She came up on deck to meet the man, and, taking the box from him, she unlocked and opened the lid, revealing a number of drawers within. She bade Mr. Li pull out and give her the top drawer, and it was seen to be full of jade ornaments of all kinds, ear-rings and tassels and hair-combs, in value several hundreds of taels.

These, in the astonished sight of Mr. Li, Mr. Sun and all the boatmen, she cast into the river. Then she bade Mr. Li pull out the second drawer, and again the third and the fourth. One was filled with flutes of jade and gold, another with gold

buttons, another with trinkets, and all, to the value of several thousand taels, she cast into the river.

By this time spectators of her actions stood round like a wall, upon the bank of the river and upon all the junks nearby. And everyone was aghast at her doings, and cried out in wonderment and in pity of such waste.

At the last Decima came to a drawer in which there was a small casket. This she opened, and it was seen to contain about a handful of lustrous pearls of wondrous size, emeralds, cats'-eyes and other jewels, the like of which had never before been seen, and of a value which none could estimate. A sigh of admiration and murmurs of astonishment, like distant thunder, went up from the spectators.

Decima appeared to be about to cast the casket into the river after the rest, when Mr. Li, stricken with remorse, attempted to throw his arms round her. Mr. Sun also exhorted her to abstain from throwing any more of her treasure into the flood. But she disregarded them both, and, pushing Mr. Li to one side, addressed Mr. Sun.

"Mr. Li and I have successfully overcome an infinity of difficulties," she cried. "By no ordinary efforts did we come to this place. But you, with your vile words, have covered me with shame and have sundered a happy union of true affection. It is you who is my enemy! I will be mindful of you even after my death, for in the nether world I will proclaim your crime aloud. And you were he who dared to think of a life of pleasure with me!"

"As for you," she went on, turning to Mr. Li, "hear this. I was the sport of the world for many years, and little by little I saved up a hoard of precious trifles which I thought would support me in my old age. Then, when I met you, we swore together an oath of fidelity, vowing never to change unto our lives' end. When we left Peking, I prevailed upon my friends to pretend to present to me this chest, my own property. The treasures that it contained were in value no less than ten thousand taels, and it was my intention to enable you thereby to return home in splendid fashion so that you might impress your parents and kin, who would thus have felt well disposed towards me and taken pity upon my resolve to leave for ever the paths of vice. They would have permitted me to have remained as one of the household, to belong to you for ever. Then in life and in death I should have had no regret. But.

alas, you have proved shallow ; you have been easily deceived by crafty and lying speeches. You were ready to cast me off midway upon your journey, thus setting at naught my faithful loyalty to you.

" This day, then, I have opened this chest in the sight of all. Its contents I have cast away, that you might see how paltry in comparison was the sum which you have preferred to me and on which you set your heart. Just as this chest hid the treasure, so my breast hid my resolution ; and in that you, with pupils in your eyes, did not see me as I really was, I despise you !

" Alas, my fate is indeed an evil one ! In early life I suffered an abyss of woe, and when at last I escape from bondage, I have to face this final shame !

" And you that have ears and eyes," she went on, turning to the spectators, " be witness of my words and deeds this day ! It is not that I am ungrateful to this one ; it is he that has cast me off ! "

As she finished speaking, all who heard were deeply affected. They reviled and spat upon Mr. Li for an ungrateful and mean-spirited person ; and he, overcome with shame, wept bitter tears of remorse. He attempted to beg Decima to forgive him. But the girl brushed him aside, and, clasping the casket in her arms, leaped with it into the bosom of the river.

All dashed forward to try and save her, but the fog rolled down and hid her from their sight and no trace of her was ever seen again.

Alas, that a girl so lovely and so peerless should thus find a grave in the maw of the river fish !

Then the spectators gnashed their teeth in rage against the two students, and were for making a sudden onslaught against them. So to save themselves the two had their junks cast off, and each sped away in his own direction.

As Mr. Li made his escape, his eyes fell upon the thousand taels of silver lying on the deck, the price that he had received for Decima, and all day long he sat brooding in shame and self-reproach till at length his mind gave way and his whole frame was stricken with a mortal sickness.

Mr. Sun from the fright that he had sustained contracted also a grievous malady and took to his bed, where he lingered for a month. But the figure of Decima was ever present by

his bedside, cursing him without cease until he died. And all men said that it was a just retribution for his crime upon the river.

IX

Meanwhile Mr. Liu Yü-ch'un in the capital soon came to the end of his period of study in the Imperial Academy, and returned home with all that was his.

On his journey he anchored in the Great River, as the luckless pair had done ; and as his junk lay there, he happened to drop into the water the copper basin in which he was washing his face at the junk's side. He hailed a passing fisherman and caused him to cast his net in to regain the basin. At last the man brought up something which was not the basin but a small casket. This Mr. Liu opened and he found it to contain a mass of wondrous jewels of great value. He liberally rewarded the fisherman and took the casket to his cabin to examine it at leisure, laying it at the head of his bed. That night he dreamed, and in his dream he saw a lovely damsel coming towards him over the water. He looked at her and recognised Decima. She came closer and saluted him and then related how she had been betrayed by Mr. Li.

"In former days I was much indebted to you, sir," she said, "for your kindness and generosity in giving to me 150 taels. I ever kept my debt in mind and it was my intention, after arriving at my journey's end, to repay you, but I was unfortunate in being prevented from doing so. To-day therefore I have conveyed to you, by means of a fisherman, a casket of jewels, and in this manner have discharged my indebtedness to you. Hereafter we shall not meet again."

Mr. Liu's dream then ended and he awoke. He had not heard of Decima's sad end, and he grieved and sighed for her during many days.

Thus it was handed down that Sun Shan-lai, a worthless person, made a vile plot to entrap a damsel and vainly flung away a thousand taels ; that Li Kan-hsien was a student devoid of virtue and lacking in understanding, who failed to recognise the worth of his lady.

On this we need not dwell. But let us grieve together for Decima and applaud her heroism, which transcended that of other women. Let us sorrow that she never found a worthy

mate who would have accompanied her to the realms of the immortals, but was mistaken in her estimate of Mr. Li and entrusted her precious self to a fool. Alas ! that their affection should have been changed to enmity and their love poured out like so much water. It was sad indeed !

Ye who know not the life by men called "gay,"
Cease once for all your random talk, and learn
That true affection here can also be—
Yea, that true love passing the wit of man.
And he that knows that love, knows, too, full well.
That in this "gaiety" need be no shame.

THE THREE DEDICATED CHAMBERS

I

DURING the reign of the twelfth Emperor of the Ming dynasty, in a district of the province of Sze-chuen, there lived a rich man, who was likely in time to be still richer. This person, whose name was Tang-yo-chuen, had an immense quantity of land. Whenever he got any money, it was his delight to add to his landed possessions ; but he would neither build houses, nor would he supply himself with any of the comforts or necessities of life, beyond what was absolutely indispensable. His disposition was to enrich himself by every means in his power, and his property increased daily, like the moon towards the full. Houses and furniture (he thought) were not only unprofitable, but there was always a fear lest the god of fire should destroy them, and they might in one moment become annihilated. If one had fine garments, there immediately came unpleasant fellows to borrow clothes. If there was plenty to eat, one soon had people claiming acquaintance, and taking their seats in quest of food. In short, there was nothing like being contented with coarse articles, for people in that case would not be seeking them.

He laid fast hold of this notion, and was determined to take care of his money. But not contented with being niggardly, he wished to assume credit to himself for it, and said that he was descended from one of the most ancient emperors, and that his ancestors were celebrated for their economy.

The father being thus parsimonious, his son was bound to obey his precepts. When people saw the avarice of the former, they observed that there was an ancient proverb which said that "if a man was a great miser, he would certainly have a prodigal son." He must inevitably have a successor who would turn things upside down ; so that Tang-yo-chuen's disposition to save was not likely to descend. To their surprise, however, the son imitated his father. From his earliest years he devoted

himself to letters, seeking preferment by every means in his power, and soon became a scholar of the third degree. In his eating and drinking he did not seek for luxury ; in his clothes he wished not for a super-abundance ; and in his pleasures he was very sparing. It was only on the subject of houses that he differed ; for there he was not contented with economy.

Being ashamed of the dwelling which they now inhabited, he wished to build a better one, but he was afraid to begin, lest the means should not be forthcoming. Having heard people say, " that to buy an old house was better than to build a new one," he observed, in a consultation on the subject with his father, that if they could purchase a handsome dwelling, fit for them to live in, they might then think of a garden, and build a library in it, to suit their own taste. As the father had an object¹ in humouuring his son, he deviated on this occasion from his usual maxims. He replied, " There is no necessity to be in a hurry ; we shall have a handsome house and garden in this very street. The house is not yet completed, but the day of its being finished must infallibly be the day of its sale ; so let us wait a while."

The son observed in answer to this, that " When people wanted to sell houses, they did not often build ; when they built houses, they did not often intend to sell them. Where, then, was the probability of this house being sold as soon as it was completed." The father replied, " Pray where did you get that crocheted ? If a man possesses ten thousand pieces of money, he may build a house which costs him only one thousand : but if his possessions in houses equal one half of his whole fortune, he may be compared to a large tree without a root, which must inevitably be blown down when the wind comes. Then how much more may this fellow, who, without possessing an hundred acres in land, builds all at once a house with a thousand rooms, be called a tree without a root ! He will not wait for the wind blowing, but will tumble down of himself. There cannot be a doubt about it."

When the son had heard this reasoning, he agreed with his father. He went about seeking for land, and said nothing more concerning houses. He was impatient, however, that the above-mentioned house should be built, in order that, the

¹ When a man in China attains to high literary rank, certain honours are conferred on his father. A Hong merchant at Canton, whose son was a member of the Imperial College, had the privilege of erecting certain poles or masts in his grounds, indicative of the favour of the emperor.

present owner being gone, the finishing stroke might be given by himself. The rich man's plans proved successful: the result justified his prediction. There are two lines of the Book of Odes which are applicable to the case.

The nest one bird constructs with anxious toil,
Ere long another seizes as her spoil.

He who was building the mansion was named Yu-soo-chin. He delighted in amusing himself with books of poetry and fancy, but did not seek eminence as a scholar. From the indolence of his disposition he had a great aversion from any office, and was not born to be a mandarin. He therefore detached his thoughts from a great name, and gave himself entirely up to odes and wine, by which means he could not but be reduced to beggary.

During his whole life he had scarcely any other delight than in arranging and building gardens and summer-houses. From the beginning of the year to the end, not a day passed without his doing something in this way. He was desirous that the place about which he was now engaged should be quite perfect, and superior to the common order of things. He said, "Let other men have their numerous acres: ostentation and riches were the concerns of others: on him they had no influence." There were only three things in which he really felt interested, and which he was determined to have of the best. These were: the house which he inhabited in the day, the bed in which he slept at night and the coffin which was to contain him when dead. Having these ideas in his abdomen,² he went on with his work, and laboured at it in an indefatigable manner.

Tang-yo-chuen's son, having waited several years without seeing him come to a conclusion, began to feel somewhat vexed and irritated, and said to his father, "Why have we delayed in vain for such a length of time? That man's house is not yet finished, nor is his money yet expended. It would seem from this, that he is a fellow of ways and means; and the point of his selling it hereafter appears to be somewhat doubtful." To this Tang-yo-chuen replied, "Every day later makes it a day more certain, and each succeeding day will make it more advantageous for us. There is no occasion for you to fret about it. The reason why his house is not finished, is simply this. When any part is completed, it does not suit his ideas of perfection, and

² The Chinese suppose that the abdomen is the seat of ideas.

he must take it to pieces to build over again. If it is excellent, he seeks for still higher excellence ; so that of every day, during which it is delayed, the alterations and improvements are wholly for our own advantage. The reason why his resources are not yet expended is the willingness of the usurers and the workmen to give him credit as long as he goes on building. The labourers do not sue him for their claims, because they fancy that by every additional day of work, they may get a day's wages ; while, if they were to press him hard, he would certainly stop the building for a while, and they would get no employment. It is thus that his money is not yet expended ; but this may be called ' taking flesh to feed an ulcer.' Do not be afraid that he is possessed of ways and means. Having arrived at the period when he can draw together no more, those who have him in their books will certainly press him in a body, and begin to curse him. He will then seek, in the first place, to sell what he has in land : but as that will not suffice to pay them, he must inevitably have recourse to his house. If he begins to collect now, at an early period, and before his debts are very large, he may stay for a good price before he sells it. Our right plan will be to wait until a later day, when his debts are a little increased, and anxious to sell, he will be willing to come down with his terms. This is all exactly as we should wish it ; why, then, go and obstinately torment yourself ? "

The son, when he had heard this, applauded and acquiesced in his father's sentiments. Indeed, after a few years, Yu-soo-chin's debts gradually accumulated, and his creditors came daily to his doors to claim them ; and there were some who would not go away again. The house which he had so long been building could not be completed ; and he at last wanted to seek a man who would buy it.

All those who are selling houses are differently circumstanced from the venders of lands. They must naturally desire to find out a purchaser in some neighbouring or contiguous situation ; for should a person from a distance wish to buy, he will make inquiries of those in the neighbourhood. If the neighbours utter a word of disadvantage, he who before was desirous to purchase, will be unwilling to do it. Not like lands, or any other property, concerning which people are less particular. Therefore in selling a house, it is certainly desirable to sell it to a neighbour.

Tang-yo-chuen was a wealthy man, and since it was as well not to trifle with him, the owner of the house of course went to offer it to him first. Both father and son, though at their hearts they greedily coveted it, merely returned for answer, "That they did not want it." They waited until he entreated them earnestly, and then went over—just to give a look. Pretending not to admire it, they observed, "That he had built it but indifferently. The apartments were not suited to a private gentleman, and the winding avenues would only impede business. The fine carved doors, when they were required to keep out thieves, would have no strength. Rooms which should be different were all alike. The ground and the air were very damp. It certainly could not sell for much. The flowers and bamboo shrubberies were like plantations of mulberry and hemp. Those who came to saunter here must be served with wine and eatables. Such a place as this was fit only to be turned into a nunnery,³ or a residence for the priests of Fo. If one wished to make family apartments for one's children, it would never answer."

Yu-soo-chin might be said to have spent his heart's blood upon it, and when he perceived that it met with nothing but disapprobation and contempt, was not altogether pleased. However, since this man was the only person who was likely to buy the house, it was well not to quarrel with him.

The people present advised Tang-yo-chuen not to say too much against it. The price was not altogether high; and even though he took it to pieces, and built it over again, it would pay for the workmen and their maintenance. The father and son of course praised and dispraised it, till they brought it down to an exceeding low price: not above one fifth of its real value.

Yu-soo-chin had no alternative, and must endure the pain of selling it. Everything was delivered over in the bonds, with the exception of one set of apartments, which had occupied his whole life, and which he had brought exactly to suit his own taste. These he would not insert in the deeds, but wished to build a partition wall, and make a separate entrance, that he might inhabit them until his death.

The son was for decidedly compelling him to sell the whole together, in order that it might be complete. His father seemed

³ There are receptacles in China for the religious of both sexes, who devote themselves to celibacy. The strange and unaccountable resemblance, which many of the leading tenets of the religion of Fo bear to those of the Roman Catholic church, led the Jesuits to assert that the Devil had invented them in spite.

to agree with the rest of the people. Screwing up his mouth, he exclaimed, "Let him sell it or not, as he pleases : it is a pity to force him. He merely wishes to keep this small shred,⁴ that it may be the means of his recovering the property hereafter, when he has improved his circumstances. It will then revert to its original master, which will be a very good thing." When the people present heard this, they all said it was the speech of a benevolent man. They little knew that it was far otherwise ; that it was altogether the language of contempt ! He concluded that it could never be recovered, and therefore left him this shred. Indeed it was quite useless, and the whole must inevitably become one house, sooner or later. They listened to his requisition, and entirely acquiescing with him in words, they divided the property, of which the new owner obtained nine parts, and the old possessor one.

The apartments, which Yu-soo-chin retained, were in the style of a Pagoda, consisting altogether of three stories. In each chamber was a tablet, written upon by some person of rank and eminence with whom he was acquainted. In the lowest room were carved lattices, crooked railings, bamboo seats, and flower stands. It was the place where he received his guests. On the tablet were inscribed large characters to this effect—

DEDICATED TO MEN

The chamber in the middle story was adorned with bright tables and clear windows, together with pictures and other furniture. This was his study, where he was accustomed to read and write. On the tablet was largely inscribed—

DEDICATED TO THE ANCIENTS

The highest chamber was empty and light. There was nothing in it besides a chafing dish for incense and a sacred book. It was here that he retreated from the crowd, retired from noise, and shut himself up in complete solitude. On the front of the tablet in this chamber was written, in large characters—

DEDICATED TO HEAVEN

⁴ There is some law existing in China, that if a man in selling his property, retain but a small portion of it, he is entitled to receive back the whole, if hereafter his improved circumstances will allow of his redeeming it. This observation may serve to explain his motive in wishing to retain this shred.

Having divided the building into compartments for these three different uses, he likewise took them unitedly, and formed a tablet, calling them—

THE THREE DEDICATED CHAMBERS

Before he had parted with the rest of his property, those three appellations, though well chosen, had still been vainly applied, since he had not made use of the apartments. The lowest chamber only could be excepted, for as he was exceedingly fond of entertaining guests, and if a person came from a distance to visit him, immediately placed a bed in it, the appellation of "Dedicated to Men" was certainly applicable. As to the two upper chambers, he had hardly been in them. But now, since his summer houses were gone, besides the chamber "Dedicated to the Ancients," he had no place in which he could read or write; and except that "Dedicated to Heaven," none to which he could retire from noise, or retreat from the crowd. All the day long he sat in them, and the names which he had dictated became truly applicable. He now fully understood that a great deal might be effected in a small and confined residence, and that it was better to despise the name, and adhere to the reality. These four popular lines are not inapplicable—

Lord of ten thousand acres, flowering fair,
A few small morsels quell thy appetite;
A thousand spreading roofs demand thy care,
And lo! six feet suffice thee every night!

The strength which he possessed had hitherto been dissipated in vain. He now applied his inventive genius collectively at a single point, and caused his dwelling to be decorated to an extraordinary degree. Residing in it, Yu-soo-chin not only forgot the misery of parting with his garden, being in fact very much relieved by the absence of that burthen, but also remained secure from a violent neighbour at his side.

II

When Tang-yo-chuen and his son had purchased their new residence, the rich man's taste unfortunately proved quite different from that of the former owner, and he wanted to alter it once again. But there was no necessity to take it to pieces,

or to change the main parts of the structure. It was like some beautiful landscape, where the only thing requisite was to add a blade of grass, or take away a tree. The appearance of it did not suit his idea of a picture. When he had worked at it for a time, he found that he had departed from his original pursuit of turning iron into gold, and contrary to his expectation, was turning gold into iron.

The persons who came to view it, agreed in saying that "The pleasure-ground was large and unsuitable, and that, after all, it was not to be compared with the Three Chambers ; though if they were both united, it would be well enough. It was no wonder (they added) that the other retained the small part, and despised the large one, or that he held it tenaciously and refused to sell it. The partition turned out to be one inch of gold and ten cubits of iron.

Both the father and son, when they heard these observations, became very sorry and repentant of the bargain : and they then learned that a man may be rich, without being altogether satisfied. They applied to the brokers, and going over to annoy their neighbour, required that he should insert the Three Chambers in the deeds, and give the whole over to them. Yusoochin, since selling the pleasure-ground, had employed no workmen and had not been at all extravagant. As his debts were all paid, and he was short neither of money nor food, what should make him wish to sell his property ? He therefore said to them in answer, " Tell me where I should repose myself, when this habitation was gone ? but I will still hold out, though you try to starve me into compliance with your demands." As his circumstances improved, he became more and more determined in his resolution.

The brokers came over and talked on the subject with the son. The latter could not help taking his father to task, and telling him, that " Though he had been all his life studying mankind, he seemed, on this occasion, for once to have been quite mistaken." The father replied, " That fellow may be as determined as he pleases during his lifetime, but he will be very quiet when he is dead. He is now an old man, and without heirs. When the breath is out of his body, his whole household must inevitably revert to strangers, and doubtless the Three Chambers among the rest. All his property will become our own ; there is no fear of its flying away up to heaven." The son, when he had heard thus far, replied, that " Though all this

might be very true, yet the man's duration seemed to be without a limit ; it was impossible to wait for his demise ; and the sooner they obtained possession of his house, the better." From this time they made Yu-soo-chin the chief subject of their thoughts ; and though they imprecated his health heartily, they rather hoped that his ruin would anticipate that event ; for they still thought that it would be impossible for him to hold out, when his food and raiment had failed him.

Who could have conceived, that when men had such virtuous wishes, heaven would not comply with them ! He continued to live on prosperously, in spite of all their hopes and imprecations. Indeed he seemed to grow stronger as he became older. Neither was he troubled with a want of clothes, nor did his subsistence fail him ; and he had no necessity to sell his Three Chambers.

Tang-yo-chuen and his son were vexed and enraged beyond measure, and after having deliberated on the next plan to be pursued, they applied to the brokers, insisting that Yu-soo-chin should redeem back what they had purchased. " Two families," said they, " cannot live in the same premises. Exalted on high in his Three Chambers, he looks down upon our dwelling ; and is able to see into our private rooms, while his own are secure from our view. This is an unequal bargain, and will never answer."

Yu-soo-chin was informed of what they said ; but he knew very well that their wish to be off the bargain was all feigned, and that the real truth was, they greedily desired to get possession of the whole. He therefore repeated what he had said before, and returned a very sharp and decisive answer.

Both father and son were of course exceedingly angry, and it now only remained for them to oppress him with the Mandarin's power. They made out a document, announcing in open court their wish to undo the bargain ; hoping, that by a little bribery, they might be able to buy over and manage that officer, and through his assistance obtain the whole property.

They were little aware that the person, with whom they had to deal, was incorruptible ; that he had formerly been a poor and obscure scholar, and was oppressed and insulted by a wealthy man. He said to them, " This is a very poor person ; how then is it possible for him to redeem it ? Yours is evidently a plot to ruin and devour him. You are people of property, and wish to be rich, rather than virtuous ; it is my business, as a

magistrate, to be virtuous rather than rich." Then in open court, he rebuked them for a while, and tearing up the deed, turned them both out.

Yu-soo-chin had an old and very worthy friend. He was a person from a distant part of the country, and one who possessed great wealth. It was his delight to expend his riches in performing acts of kindness. Happening one day to come and converse with Yu-soo-chin, he observed that he had sold his garden and pavilion ; and heaved a deep sigh. When he found, also, that people had been plotting against him, and that he could not live unmolested even in this little nest, but might hereafter be compelled to yield it up entirely, he offered immediately to produce the money, and redeem the whole back for his friend.

The latter was a man of a most independent spirit. He would not merely avoid being indebted to another for some hundreds or thousands ; but if one had offered him the smallest sum, without at the same time proving that he had a claim to it, he would have declined the acceptance. Having heard what his friend had to say, he observed, that " his warm-heartedness was all in vain, and that he was mistaken in his view of the subject. The possessions of this world were altogether transitory, and never remained for many generations in the same family. A man might take good care of them during his lifetime, but there was no securing them after death. Though now (said he) you interest yourself in my cause, and would advance large sums of money to redeem a portion of my property, yet I cannot live beyond a few years, and some day hence, when I die without heirs, every brick and tile must revert to strangers. Though now, from a generous motive, you are willing to make light of your money, I am afraid you cannot assist me hereafter. Though now, alas ! you may redeem for me my former possessions, wait a little while hence, and you cannot be of any service to my ghost ! " The friend, perceiving this to be his mode of thinking, was unwilling to press him further.

He lodged with Yu-soo-chin for several nights in the Three Chambers, and when he took leave on his return home, addressed him thus, previous to commencing his journey. " While I was reposing at night in the lowest chamber, I observed a white rat, which ran about for a while, and then quickly darted into the floor. This circumstance is, no doubt, indicative of some wealth

being concealed there. Do not on any account part with this house, for you may chance hereafter to dig up some treasure; at least such is my idea." Yu-soo-chin laughed at this as a mere joke, and having thanked his friend, they separated.

The old saying, that "No unlooked-for wealth ever fell to him who was destined to be poor," is a very true one. The purchasers of houses are the only people who dig up hidden treasures; no seller of his property ever yet found a single brass coin in his own ground. Yu-soo-chin knew this, and was too wise to entertain any such visions. He, therefore, replied to his friend's observation with a cold laugh, and did not begin to rout up the bricks and dig the earth.

Tang-yo-chuen and his son, since they had experienced the Mandarin's wrath, were as much abashed as they had before been vexed and angry. However, they were more busy than ever with their plots, and lived in hope that their neighbour would soon die; that he would soon become a childless ghost; for they might then enter his house with a good face.

Who would have conceived, that when a rich man had been right in all his conjectures, there should still be the two circumstances of life and death which would not acknowledge his control! Their neighbour not only continued to live on, but when he had arrived at upwards of sixty years, seemed to grow young again, and was fortunate enough to have a son born to him.

The Three Chambers were immediately crowded with congratulatory guests, who all exclaimed, that "Now the whole property must be redeemed!" Tang-yo-chuen and his son, when they heard of the unlucky event, were very much disturbed. They were before only afraid of not obtaining the remaining portion, but their apprehension now was that they should lose the whole: and they were anxious beyond measure on the subject.

After the lapse of a month, several brokers came to them unexpectedly, saying, "That their neighbour, after the birth of his son, had been reduced to poverty by his guests, who had completely eaten him up. He had now no other means of subsistence left, than to sell the house in which he was living. The cards of sale were already issued, and the bills pasted on the doors. They ought to seize this opportunity and pounce upon it as quickly as possible."

On hearing this, both father and son were transported with

joy ; which was only allayed by the fear, that he would remember and hate them for past circumstances ; choosing to sell it to some other person, in preference to having any dealings with them.

They were not aware that his way of thinking was quite different from their own. "The descendants of our two families (said he) are peculiarly circumstanced with respect to one another. His remote ancestor conferred the Empire on mine, who had nothing to give in return. Now, since the obligation has descended to the posterity, it would be nothing more than what was right, were I to give him this small property as a present ; I may surely, then, let him have it for a price. I will not, for the little resentments of these days, obliterate the memory of former favours. Let him not be anxious on the subject, but trust to me to fix a moderate price for it, and deliver it over into his possession."

Tang-yo-chuen, when he heard of this, was happy beyond measure ; as was also his son. The former said, "I always delighted in dwelling on my ancestors, and have ever experienced their favourable influence. Had it not been for their ancient generosity, I should never have obtained this elegant residence. It is thus that men may rejoice in having had virtuous forefathers." He then went over with the brokers, and settled the bargain. Though his disposition had always been to seek for an advantage on such occasions, yet since old things had been brought forward, he was willing for once to practise a little liberality. His neighbour, on the other hand, did not higgle about it, but imitated the generosity of Tang-yo-chuen's ancestor, who had given up his throne and his kingdom, and sought some thatched cottage, where he might live in retirement.

There were a few honest friends, who could not bring themselves to justify Yu-soo-chin. They said to him, "When you had your house, why did you not sell it to anybody rather than to him who envied and plotted against you ? He has now succeeded, and both the father and son will go about to everyone, chattering and exulting. As long as you were without an heir, you would not abate your resentment. Since you were so fortunate as to obtain one, he might have proved the means of recovering back the whole property ; and even though you had not recovered it, that which remained to you was sufficient. Why, then, did you deliver over the last remnant of your possessions to that man ? "

Yu-soo-chin, having heard what they had to say, smiled, and replied, "Your intentions, gentlemen, are very good; but you regard merely what is before your eyes, without considering the hereafter: I judge that his plots will eventually benefit me. In order to redeem back the whole property, I must have waited until my son was grown up, when it might have been possible to recover it. But I am an old man, and conceive that I cannot live so long; and who can tell, whether, after my death, my son would not have sold the Three Chambers to Tang-yo-chuen? Having at length succeeded in getting it from the son, he would have laughed at, and abused the memory of the father. It is better that the father should sell the property, and then people will be compassionate and assist the son."

"The above, however, might not have been the worst evil. It is ten thousand to one that I should very soon have died while my son was yet an infant. My wife, being content to strive with hunger, would not have parted with the property to our enemy. He, seeing that the new would not come into his hands, and fearing, also, that the old might be redeemed, would certainly have laid plots to cut off my heir. Thus I am fearful, that not only the property would have been lost, but my son sacrificed besides. This indeed might be called a loss! By selling it cheap to him now, I have merely made a kind of deposit, and caused him to incur a debt, which will be paid into the hands of my son. If he does not pay it, I think it possible that others will. The old proverb says, 'To endure injuries is the sure policy.'"

When they had heard this, his friends, though they were somewhat startled by his reasons, still maintained their former opinion. The old man died suddenly, a very few years after he had sold his whole property, and left his son, a child, under the protection of his widow, who possessed scarcely anything. Their sole reliance was on the price which had been obtained for the house, and which produced a little interest, just enough to subsist upon. Tang-yo-chuen's possessions became every day greater. He knew how to make money, and his son knew how to take care of it. Everything came in; nothing went out; and the property which he had bought seemed so secure, that it might last for a thousand years.

Everyone arraigned the wisdom of Heaven, saying, that "The descendants of those persons who had been liberal and just possessed little or nothing; while the progeny of those

who had enriched themselves by unworthy means were so well off." The saying of the ancients, however, is very true, that "when virtue and vice have arrived at their full, they must finally be recompensed; the only difference being, whether sooner or later." These words are constantly in men's mouths, but leave very little impression on their hearts. Though the recompense come late, it is the same thing as if it came early; and indeed his lot, who waits for his punishment, is the worst.

The subject of late or early recompenses very much resembles laying out money, and receiving back the interest. If you receive it one day sooner, you receive one day's less interest: if you leave it for a year longer, you get a year's additional interest. Should you look for the reward of your good deeds with an anxious heart, Heaven may not immediately send it, and it may seem as if no reward awaited you. But when you have lost all expectation, and given up the hope, the recompense will suddenly arrive; like a bad debt of many years' standing, which, when the lender has forgotten it, comes unexpectedly to his door, with an exceeding large accumulation of interest. This is far better than an early payment.

When Yu-soo-chin's son, who was called Ke-woo, had reached the age of seventeen or eighteen, he soon acquired a literary title. He was created governor of a district, and being called to court, was afterwards raised to a still higher office. As he was a person who dared to speak in the cause of rectitude, he became a great favourite with the reigning Emperor.

At length, when his mother became old, he requested leave to retire and take care of her. Making the best of his way home, and being as yet some miles from it, he perceived a woman, not much more than twenty, with a paper in her hand, kneeling by the wayside, and exclaiming to him aloud, "I entreat, sir, that you will receive and examine this." Ke-woo told her to come into the boat,⁵ and taking the document from her, looked at it. It turned out to be a deed, or bond, in the name of her husband, who desired, with his family and effects to come under his protection, and become his slaves.⁶ Ke-woo

⁵ Almost all journeys are performed in China by water. The British Embassy of 1816, of which the translator was a member, travelled a distance of about 1200 miles, along canals and navigable rivers.

⁶ "It is to be observed, that the slavery, which is recognised and tolerated by the laws of China, is a mild species of servitude, and perhaps not very degrading in a country, in which no condition of life appears to admit of any considerable degree of personal liberty and independence."—*Staunton's Penal Code*, p. 293, note.

said to her, " If I may judge by your appearance, you are of a respectable family, why do you wish to throw yourselves under my protection ? How happens it, too, that your husband does not show himself, instead of permitting you, a woman, to come to the roadside, and cry out aloud ? "

The woman replied, " We are the descendants of an ancient family ; but my father-in-law, while he lived, being very fond of buying lands, unceasingly endeavoured to add to his stock every acre of ground, and every house, which adjoined to his own. Those persons, who sold to him their property did not part with it willingly, but each of them hated him in his heart. Before my father-in-law died, they happened, in the first place, to be favourable times, which prevented him from breaking in upon his wealth : secondly, he was a person of some rank and influence, and if a magistrate had any charge against him, it became necessary only to spend a little money, in order to live unmolested. At length, the favourable times no longer existed, and before the expiration of half a year, my father-in-law died. My husband was young, and moreover possessed no rank. The persecutors of the orphan and widow rushed upon him in a body, and all went before the magistrate with accusations against him : so that, within a year, he experienced a great many different charges, and the larger half of his property was expended. But a still worse evil has since befallen him. He is in prison ; and money alone will not release him. The only hope of his liberation rests on the zealous interference of some person of influence, and yourself are the only one to whom we can look on this occasion. Besides, sir, the business in which my husband is involved has considerable relation to you ; and though he seems the only person concerned, it may yet be considered as your own cause. He therefore wrote this document, and desired me to come and throw ourselves under your protection, offering to you both our property and our personal services, and only entreating that you will not consider them as worthless, but accept of them without delay."

Ke-woo was at a loss to express his surprise on hearing the above, and asked her, " Pray what may the business be, in which you are involved, and which has so much concern with myself ? Doubtless during my absence from home, my household have been getting into mischief, and in conjunction with you and your husband produced this evil. Do you wish me to identify myself with a parcel of strangers, and, by affording

them my countenance and protection, incur criminality through an unjust stretch of power?"

The woman replied, "This is by no means the case. In the midst of our property is a tall building, called 'the Three Dedicated Chambers,' which originally belonged, sir, to your family, but was afterwards sold to us. We lived there for several years without molestation; until some unknown enemy lately presented an anonymous petition, stating, 'that my husband was one of a nest of robbers, and that the three generations, from grandfather to grandson, were all rogues; that twenty pieces of treasure were now deposited under the Three Chambers, and that when the hoard was taken up, the particulars would be understood.' When the magistrate had seen this document, he quietly sent some thief-takers forward to raise up the hoard; and contrary to all expectation, they certainly produced from under the flooring, twenty pieces of treasure. My husband was immediately apprehended, and taken to the magistrate's court. He was pointed out as a harbourer of thieves, and severely tortured and beaten, with a view that he might discover his associates, together with the rest of the spoil which they might have taken.

"My husband endeavoured, as well as he could, to solve this extraordinary affair; but was unable to get at the truth. Far from having any claim to the treasure which had been discovered, he knew not whence it had flown thither. Being ignorant of every circumstance connected with it, we were unable to unravel the mystery; but might still rejoice that no one appeared to have lost it. The magistrate committed my husband to prison on suspicion, but has not yet decided on his crime. My husband considered the subject minutely, and thought it probable, that as our house and grounds formerly belonged to your family, your grandfather might have deposited the treasure in the floor, and your father, ignorant of the circumstance, never removed it. Hence, that which should have been a profitable thing, turned out to be a source of misfortune.

"We do not wish to inquire into the truth of this point, but only entreat, sir, that you will claim the money as your own. When the money is thus disposed of, my husband will be restored from death to life, and as your interference will be the cause of this, our whole property should be presented to you in recompense. The house and grounds, which were

constructed by your father with such pains and labour, have a particular claim to be restored to you, and we therefore entreat, sir, that you will not reject them."

Ke-woo, hearing this, could not help suspecting that something was wrong. He said to her in answer, " My family have made it a maxim of old, to refuse all such offers. There is no occasion to speak now about your throwing yourselves under my protection. It is true that the house and grounds were formerly possessed by my family; but they were regularly sold, with all the forms of brokers and deeds, and were not conjured away by your relations. If I want them again, therefore, I must pay the original price for them, and there is no reason why you should give them back to me for nothing. As to the treasure, I have no concern with it whatever, and cannot with any propriety lay claim to it. Go now, and wait until I have had an interview with the magistrate. I will request him to investigate the subject with care, as it is highly necessary to have a clear decision. Should the charges be proved to be untrue, your husband will, of course, be released from prison, and certainly will not be put to death unjustly."

When the woman had heard this, she rejoiced exceedingly, and returning him ten thousand thanks, took her departure.

III

Ke-woo, after his interview with the woman, made the best of his way home. He then fancied himself to be the examining magistrate, and considered the subject in different lights, saying to himself, " Not to mention that this treasure cannot be the patrimony of my ancestors, yet allowing that it were so, how came I, their descendant, to know nothing about it, nor my kindred to contend for its possession? On the contrary, it was a person out of the family who knew of it, and who presented a petition on the subject. As this petition was without a name, it is plain that he must be an enemy; I have no doubt about it. At the same time, supposing that he had some cause of enmity, it was not well to charge the other with such a vile act, and to point him out as a harbourer of thieves. Then, again, at the time of taking up the treasure, the petitioner's words were verified, and it answered exactly to the amount specified in the document, without being either more or less.

It is difficult to conceive that he who presented the petition for the sake of gratifying a secret enmity should be willing to risk such a vast sum, and having placed it in another's ground, proceed to carry on so extraordinary a business."

He considered it for several days, but could make nothing of the matter. It was the constant subject of his thoughts, and during his sleep, and in his dreams, he cried out and muttered broken sentences. His mother, hearing him, inquired the reason of this; and then he recounted to her minutely what the woman had said to him. On first hearing it, his mother, too, was very much perplexed, but having considered it awhile, discovered the truth, and exclaimed, "It must be so, indeed! This treasure does certainly belong to our family; and the man was right enough in his conjectures. When your father was alive, he had a friend who came from a distance to see him. This friend remained for several nights in the lowest of the Three Dedicated Chambers, and perceived (he said) a white rat which ran about for a while, and they darted into the floor. At the time of his departure, he spoke to your father, desiring him by no means to sell the apartments, since he might hereafter find some unlooked-for treasure. By all appearances, this treasure has now come to light. Your father, by not searching for it, made a cause of misfortune to others; do you, therefore, go and claim it, and thereby save the man's life."

Her son replied, "There is something more to be said on the subject. An idle story like this is not fit for the mouth of a respectable person, and when I talk about a white rat to the magistrate, he will probably suspect that I covet that large sum of money, and, unwilling to claim it openly, have trumped up this story, in order to impose upon simple people. Besides, neither was this white rat seen by my father, nor was this foolish story related by him. The more I consider it, the more ridiculous does it appear. It may indeed be called the dream of a fool. If the treasure were the property of our family, my father should have seen those indications; or how happened it that, instead of appearing to me, they were perceived by a stranger? The whole story is false; it is impossible to believe it. Still, however, we ought to consult with the magistrate, with a view to clearing up this mysterious business, and saving a guiltless wretch. This will be acting a correct and virtuous part."

As he had done speaking, a servant suddenly announced that

the magistrate had arrived, to pay his respects. Ke-woo said, "I was just now wishing to see him; request him to walk in immediately." When the magistrate had made his bow, and talked a little on general subjects, he did not wait until Ke-woo began the subject of the mystery, but took it up himself, and requested to hear all that he knew about it, saying, that "The person in whose house the hoard had been found, although repeatedly and strictly examined, had discovered nothing. He yesterday" (said he) "made a deposition, stating, that the place where the treasure had been taken up belonged formerly to your family, and that, therefore, it must have been left by your ancestors. I accordingly came here, in the first place, to pay my respects, and secondly, to request your information on the subject, being quite ignorant of the truth."

Ke-woo replied, "My family has for several successive generations been very poor, nor did my immediate predecessors accumulate anything in money. It would, therefore, be rash in me to lay claim to this treasure, by which means I should acquire a bad name. There must be something in this affair which we do not understand; nor is it necessary to assert that it is a hoard accumulated by a nest of thieves. I therefore entreat, sir, that you will continue a strict investigation, and effect a decision of this doubtful business. Should you be able to bring the crime home to the prisoner, then well and good."

The magistrate said, "When your father departed this life,⁷ though you, sir, were still a child, and therefore, perhaps, not very well acquainted with former circumstances; yet may we not ask your mother if, before the property was disposed of, she either saw or heard of anything particular."

He replied, "I have already interrogated my mother, but she talks somewhat at random, and my father never mentioned a word on the subject. As I am now conversing with you on business, it would be improper to repeat anything unadvisedly. I will, therefore, keep it to myself." The magistrate insisted on his telling it out; but Ke-woo was determined to say nothing.

His mother was fortunately standing behind the screen, and wishing sincerely to do a good action, desired her steward to go and recount the story in question for his master. When the magistrate had heard it, he considered silently for a time, and

⁷ The Chinese have a superstitious dread of mentioning death in direct terms. The expression in the original is "to pass over to immortality, or become immortal."

then said to the steward, "I will trouble you to go in again, and ask, where is the residence of him who saw the white rat; whether his family is rich or poor; on what terms of intimacy your master lived with him; and if they were in the habit of rendering each other mutual assistance. I have to request that your lady will speak with precision, as the present day's inquiry may serve in the place of a formal trial, and this obscure case be happily cleared up."

The steward went in for a while, and coming back, answered, "My mistress says that the person who saw the white rat came from a considerable distance, and lived in such and such a district. He is yet alive, and his fortune is very large. He is a person of great worth, who sets a small value on riches, and lived on terms of strictest friendship with my former master. Seeing that he had sold his pleasure ground, and that he would be compelled to part with his Three Chambers, he wished to produce the money, and redeem the whole for him. As my master would not consent, his friend pressed him no further. The words in question are those which he uttered at the period of his departure." The magistrate, having considered a little, directed the steward to go in and ask, "If, after the death of his lady's husband, the friend had come to pay honours to the deceased; and if his lady could mention any expression which she might have heard him utter."

The steward went in and returned, saying, "When my master had been dead for more than ten years, his friend came to pay honours to his memory. Seeing that the Three Chambers were sold, he was much surprised, and asked my mistress, 'Did you, after my departure, obtain that unlooked for treasure which I predicted?' She answered, that indeed they did not. He then sighed, and observed that 'it was a fine piece of good fortune for those who had bought the property. Deceitful in their hearts, and contriving plots to get possession of the place, they had acquired wealth which they did not deserve. In a short time, however, they would experience an unlooked for calamity.' A very few days after his departure, some person brought an accusation against the prisoner, and gave rise to this business. My mistress constantly praised and admired her friend, declaring that he was one who could see into futurity."

The magistrate having heard thus far, laughed heartily, and going towards the screen, made a low bow, saying, "Many thanks to you, madam, for your information, which has enabled

me, a dull person, to make out this extraordinary affair. There is no occasion for further inquiry. I will trouble your messenger to bring a receipt, and will immediately send the twenty pieces of treasure to your house."

Ke-woo exclaimed, "What is your reason for this?—I beg, sir, that you will inform me." The magistrate replied, "These twenty pieces of treasure were neither left by your ancestors, nor were they plundered by the prisoner. The fact was just this. That worthy person wished to redeem the property for your father, but as he possessed a very independent disposition, and was tenacious in his refusal, your friend deposited the money in the floor, as the means of redeeming the property hereafter. Not wishing to declare this plainly, he pretended the agency of some spirit, with the idea that when he was gone, your father would take up the treasure. When he came afterwards to pay honours to the deceased, observing that the pleasure ground had not been recovered, but that the Three Chambers were also sold, your friend knew that the treasure was in the hands of the enemy, and of course was vexed beyond measure. At his departure, therefore, he presented an anonymous petition, with the intention of waiting until the family of the prisoner was broken up, and the property dismembered. As the truth is now plain, your original possessions ought to be restored to you. What have you to say against this?"

Ke-woo, though in his heart he admired him for his decision, had still an objection to claiming the treasure, from the suspicion which might be attached to himself. He did not wish to take it in too great a hurry, but making the magistrate a bow, observed, that "He had formed an excellent conclusion, and must be possessed of admirable wisdom. That though Lung-too⁸ himself were to reappear, he could not equal this. At the same time (said he), though you conclude this treasure must have been left by our generous friend, still there are no persons to bear witness to it, and it would not be well for me to put in a claim rashly. I therefore, entreat, sir, that you will keep it in your treasury to relieve the wants of the people during famine."

While he was yet declining it, a servant came in, with a red ticket in his hand, and announced a visitor to his master in a whisper, saying, "The person of whom you have just

⁸ A famous magistrate of ancient times, who is now deified, and has temples to his memory.

now been talking⁶ is arrived at the door. He says that he has come from a great distance to pay his respects to my mistress. The magistrate being present, I ought not to have announced him; but since he is acquainted with the business in question, and seems to have come at a lucky moment, I therefore acquaint you, sir, with his arrival, in case you may wish to interrogate him." Ke-woo was greatly rejoiced, and informed the magistrate. The latter was ready to dance with joy, and desired that he might be requested to enter immediately.

He was a very respectable-looking old man, with a round face, and white locks. He paid his respects to his friend, but only slightly regarded the magistrate, who was a stranger to him, and making a bow, passed onward, saying, "The object of my visit was to see the wife of my deceased friend. I came not to court the rich or powerful, nor do your affairs concern me, a person from a distant part of the country. I cannot presume to intrude on you; so show me the way into the house, that I may visit the lady."

Ke-woo answered, "As my venerable friend has come from a great distance, it is not right to treat him as a casual visitor; but since the magistrate is engaged in an affair of difficulty, and wishes to ask you some questions, and since it is a fortunate occurrence to find you here, we entreat that you will sit down for a moment."

On this he made his obeisance, and sat down. The magistrate took some tea with him, and then bowing, said, "I believe, sir, that you are the person, who, about twenty years ago, performed an act of great virtue, which it has now fallen to my lot to bring to light. Were you not the author of that hidden treasure, which was left for your friend, without any other notice than by some reference to the agency of spirits?"

The old man was taken somewhat by surprise, and for a moment did not speak. Having recovered from his embarrassment, he replied, "How should such a rustic as I perform any act of great virtue?—What can you mean, sir, by your question?"

Ke-woo answered, "Some words, respecting a white rat, were heard to proceed from your mouth. In consequence of certain suspicious appearances, they were going to impute the

⁶ This servant must have waited at the conferences. It is customary, among the Chinese, to have a great number of attendants present on all occasions of ceremony, with a view to avoid the suspicion of conspiracy.

crime of harbouring thieves to an innocent person. As I could not bear to see this, I entreated the magistrate to set him at liberty. While we were conversing together on the subject, we by degrees got a clue to it ; but being still uncertain whether the story of the white rat be true or false, we have to request a word, sir, from you to settle it."

The old man was determined in his refusal, and would not speak, until a message came from the lady of the house, begging him to give up the whole truth, in order that an innocent person might be exculpated. He then smiled, and made a complete disclosure of the circumstances, which had been profoundly secreted in his breast for more than twenty years. They agreed to a tittle with what the magistrate had said. Having directed the people to bring the treasure, in order that they might examine the letters and marks upon its surface, all these particulars corresponded exactly.

The magistrate and Ke-woo admired the old gentleman's great virtues ; Ke-woo expatiated with the old gentleman on the penetrating intellect of the magistrate ; while the magistrate again, and the old gentleman, dealt out their praises on the conduct of Ke-woo, who had conferred benefits, instead of cherishing resentment. "Such actions as these," they observed, "would be hereafter talked of far and wide : this might be predicted without the aid of divination."

They went on with their praises of each other without ceasing, and the attendants who were present, put their hands to their mouths, in order to conceal their laughter, observing, that "The magistrate had issued orders to apprehend him who had presented the anonymous petition. Having found him out, he was sitting down and conversing with him, instead of giving him a beating. This was certainly a novel proceeding !"

When the magistrate returned to his office, he sent a messenger to deliver the twenty pieces of treasure, and to procure a receipt for the same. Ke-woo, however, would not accept it. He wrote back a letter to that officer, requesting that he would give the money over to the family of the prisoner, and redeem the property with it. That, in the first place, this would be fulfilling the intentions of his father ; secondly, it would accord with the wishes of his generous friend ; and lastly, it would enable the prisoner's family to purchase some other residence. Thus, neither the givers nor the receivers would be injured in the least.

All parties praised such unexampled generosity. The magistrate, in compliance with the words of the letter, released the prisoner from his confinement, and delivering to him the original price, received from him the two deeds, by which the property had been sold. A messenger being sent off with these, the pleasure ground, and the dwelling, were delivered into the possession of their original master.

On the same day, in the highest of the Three Dedicated Chambers, he offered up wine, in token of gratitude to heaven, saying, "Thus amply has my father's virtue been rewarded; thus bitter has been the recompense of Tang-yo-chuen's crimes! Oh, how is it that they can delight in being vicious!"

Tang-yo-chuen's son and his wife made out a deed, as before, delivering up their persons, and together with the price of the property, which they had received from the magistrate, offered themselves to Ke-woo, entreating that he would accept of their services for the remainder of their lives. He resolutely declined their offer, but at the same time soothed them with kind words. Then the husband and wife, having engraved a votive tablet, wishing him long life, took it home and made offerings to it. Though they could not prevail on him to receive them into his service, they still recognised him as their master. They not only endeavoured to recompense his favours, but likewise wished people to understand that they were a part of his family, for then nobody, they thought, would venture to molest them.

With a view to the remembrance of these events, everyone had by heart a stanza of verses, which admonished persons of opulence to refrain from contriving schemes for the acquisition of their neighbour's property. The lines were to this effect—

By want compell'd, he sold his house and land,
Both house and land the purchasers return;
Thus profit ends the course by virtue plann'd,
While envious plotters their misfortunes mourn.

THE MORAL

The clear judgment of the magistrate, the disinterested generosity of the old friend, and the moderation of Ke-woo, in living retired without cherishing resentment, are all three deserving of everlasting remembrance. Those who are magistrates ought to make the first their example. Persons of

influence, who reside in the country, ought to take a lesson of the last. Those, however, who possess great wealth, should not altogether copy the old friend, because his conduct, in presenting the anonymous petition, cannot be held up as an example. It may be observed of the actions of such generous friends in general, that very few are fit to be imitated, and that those, whose conduct can be recommended, have always been men of justice. The difference between those who are just, and those who are only generous, consists in the conduct of the one being worthy of imitation, and that of the others, not.

EGYPT

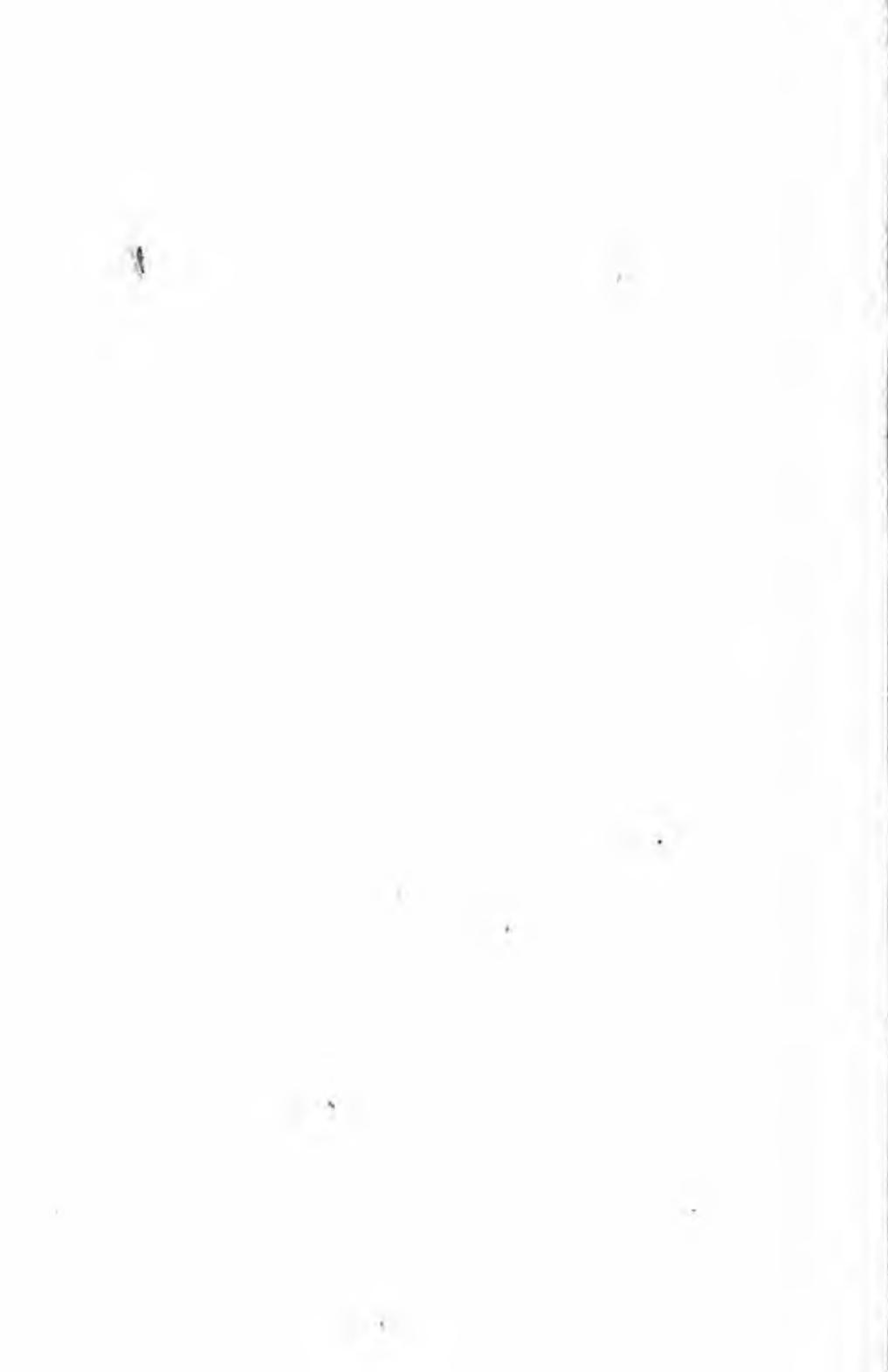
SCHOLARSHIP in France, where Oriental tales are concerned, was generally ahead of this country. Thus Galland made known to the Western world *The Thousand Nights*; and Gaston Maspero in his *Contes Populaires* did the same for Egypt. But the subsequent work of Burton and Petrie established English scholarship. It was Sir Flinders Petrie who, with F. Llewellyn Griffith, retranslated from the original papyrus some of the earliest stories extant, for some Egyptian stories have survived from the thirteenth century B.C. In his notes to "The Peasant and the Workman," the first of the two Egyptian stories included here, Petrie tells us that "three copies more or less imperfect remain. (Two of which were in Berlin)." ¹ The beginning of the tale is lost in all the copies, and the story purports to show the social difference between the Sekhti (peasant) and the Hemti (workman)—it is the age-long story of injustice. The period of this tale is the Ninth and Tenth Dynasties. In regard to the speeches of the Sekhti, Petrie tells us that they were "given at full length in the papyrus, but owing to injuries we cannot now entirely recover them; they are all in much the same strain, only the first and last are translated here, the others are passed over." ²

The second story is taken from Professor Lewis's collection of Egyptian stories which range from the earliest times to the nineteenth century,³ and was written in 1883 by Wilhelm Spitta Bey, and published under the title of "Contes Arabes Modernes." These tales were related to him by his cook Hassan, of whom he said, "He cannot read or write, but is intelligent and possesses an excellent memory, with this quality he has retained since childhood all the stories told him by his mother, his aunts and old women who visited his parents' house." Spitta took down the stories as told him, in the dialect of Lower Egypt and published them in a phonetic transcription.

¹ Petrie, *Egyptian Tales*, vol. i., p. 75.

² *Land of Enchanters*, 1948.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 79.





THE PEASANT AND THE WORKMAN

THERE dwelt in the Sekhet Hemat—or salt country—a peasant called the Sekhti, with his wife and children, his asses and his dogs ; and he trafficked in all good things of the Sekhet Hemat to Henenseten. Behold now he went with rushes, natron, and salt, with wood and pods, with stones and seeds, and all good products of the Sekhet Hemat. And this Sekhti journeyed to the South unto Henenseten ; and when he came to the lands of the house of Fefa, North of Denat, he found a man there standing on the bank, a man called Hemti—the workman—son of a man called Asri, who was a serf of the High Steward Meruitensa. Now said this Hemti, when he saw the asses of Sekhti, that were pleasing in his eyes. “ Oh that some good god would grant me to steal away the goods of Sekhti from him ! ”

Now the Hemti’s house was by the dyke of the tow-path, which was straitened, and not wide, as much as the width of a waist cloth : on the one side of it was the water, and on the other side of it grew his corn. Hemti said then to his servant, “ Hasten ! bring me a shawl from the house,” and it was brought instantly. Then spread he out this shawl on the face of the

dyke, and it lay with its fastening on the water and its fringe on the corn.

Now Sekhti approached along the path used by all men. Said Hemti, "Have a care, Sekhti ! you are not going to trample on my clothes !" Said Sekhti, "I will do as you like, I will pass carefully." Then went he up on the higher side. But Hemti said, "Go you over my corn, instead of the path ?" Said Sekhti, "I am going carefully ; this high field of corn is not my choice, but you have stopped your path with your clothes, and will you then not let us pass by the side of the path ?" And one of the asses filled its mouth with a cluster of corn. Said Hemti, "Look you, I shall take away your ass, Sekhti, for eating my corn ; behold it will have to pay according to the amount of the injury." Said Sekhti, "I am going carefully ; the one way is stopped, therefore took I my ass by the enclosed ground, and do you seize it for filling its mouth with a cluster of corn ? Moreover, I know unto whom this domain belongs, even unto the Lord Steward Meruitensa. He it is who smites every robber in this whole land ; and shall I then be robbed in his domain ?"

Said Hemti, "This is the proverb which men speak : 'A poor man's name is only his own matter.' I am he of whom you spake, even the Lord Steward of whom you think." Thereon he took to him branches of green tamarisk and scourged all his limbs, took his asses, and drove them into the pasture. And Sekhti wept very greatly, by reason of the pain of what he had suffered. Said Hemti, "Lift not up your voice, Sekhti, or you shall go to the Demon of Silence," Sekhti answered, "You beat me, you steal my goods, and now would take away even my voice, O Demon of Silence ! If you will restore my goods, then will I cease to cry out at your violence."

Sekhti stayed the whole day petitioning Hemti, but he would not give ear unto him. And Sekhti went his way to Khenensuten to complain to the Lord Steward Meruitensa. He found him coming out from the door of his house to embark on his boat, that he might go to the judgment hall. Sekhti cried, "Ho ! turn, that I may please thy heart with this discourse. Now at this time let one of thy followers whom thou wilt, come to me that I may send him to thee concerning it." The Lord Steward Meruitensa made his follower, whom he chose, go straight unto him, and Sekhti sent him back with an account of all these matters. Then the Lord Steward

Meruitensa accused Hemti unto the nobles who sat with him ; and they said unto him, " By your leave : As to this Sekhti of yours, let him bring a witness. Behold thou it is our custom with our Sekhtis ; witnesses come with them ; behold that is our custom. Then it will be fitting to beat this Hemti for a trifle of natron and a trifle of salt ; if he is commanded to pay for it, he will pay for it." But the High Steward Meruitensa held his peace ; for he would not reply unto these nobles, but would reply unto the Sekhti.

Now Sekhti came to appeal to the Lord Steward Meruitensa, and said, " O my Lord Steward, greatest of the great, guide of the needy :

When thou embarkest on the lake of truth,
Mayest thou sail upon it with a fair wind ;

May thy mainsail not fly loose.
May there not be lamentation in thy cabin ;
May not misfortune come after thee.
May not thy mainstays be snapped ;
Mayest thou not run aground.
May not the wave seize thee ;
Mayest thou not taste the impurities of the river ;
Mayest thou not see the face of fear.

May the fish come to thee without escape ;
Mayest thou reach unto plump waterfowl.
For thou art the orphan's father, the widow's husband,
The desolate woman's brother, the garment of the motherless.

Let me celebrate thy name in this land for every virtue.
A guide without greediness of heart ;
A great one without any meanness.

Destroying deceit, encouraging justice ;
Coming to the cry, and allowing utterance.

Let me speak, do thou hear and do justice ;
O praised ! whom the praised ones praise.

Abolish oppression, behold me, I am overladen,
Reckon with me, behold me defrauded.

Now the Sekhti made this speech in the time of the majesty of the King Neb-ka-n-ra, blessed. The Lord Steward Meruitensa went away straight to the king and said, " My lord, I have found one of these Sekhti, excellent of speech, in very truth ; stolen are his goods, and he has come to complain to me of the matter."

His majesty said, "As thou wishest that I may see health ! lengthen out his complaint, without replying to any of his speeches. He who desireth him to continue speaking should be silent ; behold, bring us his words in writing, that we may listen to them. But provide for his life and his children, and let the Sekhti himself also have a living. Thou must cause one to give him his portion without letting him know that thou art he who is giving it to him."

There were given to him four loaves and two draughts of beer each day ; which the Lord Steward Meruitensa provided for him, giving it to a friend of his, who furnished it unto him. Then the Lord Steward Meruitensa sent the governor of the Sekhet Hemat to make provision for the wife of the Sekhti, three rations of corn each day.

Then came the Sekhti a second time, and even a third time, unto the Lord Steward Meruitensa ; but he told two of his followers to go unto the Sekhti, and seize on him, and beat him with staves. But he came again unto him, even unto six times, and said—

My Lord Steward—

Destroying deceit, and encouraging Justice ;
Raising up every good thing, and crushing every evil ;
As plenty comes removing famine,
As clothing covers nakedness,
As clear sky after storm warms the shivering ;
As fire cooks that which is raw,
As water quenches the thirst ;
Look with thy face upon my lot ; do not covet, but content me
without fail ; do the right and do not evil.

But yet Meruitensa would not hearken unto his complaint ; and the Sekhti came yet, and yet again, even unto the ninth time. Then the Lord Steward told two of his followers to go unto the Sekhti ; and the Sekhti feared that he should be beaten as at the third request. But the Lord Steward Meruitensa then said unto him, "Fear not, Sekhti, for what thou has done. The Sekhti has made many speeches, delightful to the heart of his majesty and I take an oath—as I eat bread, and as I drink water—that thou shalt be remembered to eternity." Said the Lord Steward, "Moreover, thou shalt be satisfied when thou shalt hear of thy complaints." He caused to be written on a clean roll of papyrus each petition to the end, and the Lord Steward Meruitensa sent it to the majesty of the King Neb-ka-n-ra, blessed, and it was good to him more than

anything that is in the whole land : but his majesty said to Meruitensa, " Judge it thyself ; I do not desire it."

The Lord Steward Meruitensa made two of his followers to go to the Sekhet Hemat, and bring a list of the household of the Sekhti ; and its amount was six persons, besides his oxen and his goats, his wheat and his barley, his asses and his dogs ; and moreover he gave all that which belonged unto the Hemti to the Sekhti, even all his property and his offices, and the Sekhti was beloved of the king more than all his overseers, and ate of all the good things of the king, with all his household.

THE STORY OF 'ARAB-ZANDIQ

THERE was once a king who said to his vizier : " Let us go and take a walk in the town by night." They walked and came upon a house where people were talking by night. They stood near and heard a woman say : " If the king marries me I will make him a pancake big enough for him and his army." A second woman said : " If the king marries me I will make him a tent big enough for him and his army." Then a third one said : " If the king marries me I will bear him a daughter and a son with alternate hairs of gold and hyacinth. If they cry it will thunder and the rain will fall, and if they laugh the sun and the moon will rise." The king heard their words and walked away. When day broke he sent for the three of them and drew up the contract of marriage with them. On the first night he slept with the first and said to her : " Where is the pancake big enough for me and my army ? " She answered : " The words of the night are greased with butter. When day rises they melt." On the second night he slept with the second and said to her : " Where is the tent big enough for me and my army ? " She said : " It was a word that came to my mind." He ordered them both to the kitchen with the slave-girls. On the third night he slept with the youngest, and said to her : " Where are the son and the daughter with alternate hairs of gold and hyacinth ? " She said : " Be patient with me for nine months and nine minutes."

She conceived and the nine months and nine minutes passed by. On the night when she was to give birth they sent for the midwife. But the king's other wife went and met her on the way and said to her : " When you deliver her child, how much will the king give you ? " She answered : " He will command that they give me fifteen mahbūbs." She said to her : " Take these forty mahbūbs from me and take these two blind dogs. When she gives birth to the son and daughter take them away and put them in a casket and put these two dogs in their place. Take away the children and kill them."

The midwife took the money and went, and when the children were born she took them away, placed them in a casket and put the two dogs in their place. Then she went to the king and said to him : " I am afraid to tell you." He said : " Tell me. I give you protection." She said : " She has born two dogs." Then the king said : " Take her, cover her with pitch and tie her to the stairs, and whoever goes up and whoever goes down will spit on her. They took her and tied her to the staircase. The old midwife took away the children in the casket and went to throw it in the river. Now there was a fisherman who lived with his wife on an island, and his wife had born no issue. The fisherman went down in the morning to fish, and he found the casket thrown on to the bank. He took it and went to his wife and put it between them and said to her : " Listen, O woman. I shall make a pact with you. If this is money it is my portion, and if it is children it is your portion." She said : " It is well. I am satisfied with this." They opened the casket and found the boy and the girl. The boy had put his finger in the girl's mouth and the girl had put her finger in the boy's mouth, and they were sucking one another's fingers. The woman picked them up and took them out of the casket and prayed to her Lord : " Send me milk into my breasts for the sake of these children." By the power of the Almighty the milk came into her breasts. She reared them until they grew up and were twelve years old. The fisherman went down to fish and he caught two large white fish. The boy said to him : " These two white fish are beautiful, my father. I will take them to sell or to give them as a gift to the king." The boy took them and went and sat in the fish-market. The people gathered around him. Those who were not looking at the fish were looking at the boy. The king passed that way and saw the two white fish and the boy, and called out to him : " How much are those ? " He answered : " For you, nothing." The king took him to the palace and said to him : " What is your name ? " He said : " My name is Muhammad and my father is the fisherman who lives in the middle of the island." The king gave the boy thirty mahbūbs, and said to him : " Go, clever one, and come back here every day."

The boy went and gave his father the thirty mahbūbs. The next day he took the fish and went to give them to the king. The king took them, went into the garden with him and made him sit by him. The king sat drinking wine and looking at the

beauty of the boy. Love for the boy entered his heart, and he stayed with him for two hours. Then he ordered a horse for him to ride when he came and went to the king. He mounted the horse and rode away. The next day he came to the king and sat with him in the garden. The king's wife looked out of the window and saw the boy, and knew him. She sent for the old woman and said to her : " I told you to kill those children. They are still living on the face of the earth." She answered : " Be patient with me, O Queen, for three days, and I will kill him." The old woman went and bought a pitcher. She bound a sash round it and bewitched it. Then she mounted it and struck it with a whip. The pitcher flew with her and alighted on the island by the fisherman's hut. She met the girl, the sister of the clever Muhammad, sitting alone, and said to her : " O my daughter, why do you sit alone and so unhappy ? Tell your brother to bring you the rose of 'Arab-Zandiq, to stay with you and sing to you and amuse you instead of sitting alone and so unhappy." The old woman said these words and left her. When her brother came to her, he found her unhappy and said : " Why are you so unhappy, my sister ? " She said : " I want the rose of 'Arab-Zandiq, to sing to me and amuse me." He answered : " I am ready. I will bring it to you."

He mounted his horse and travelled far into the mountain. He met an ogress sitting and grinding corn with a handmill. He dismounted from his horse and found her breasts thrown back over her shoulders. He drank from her right breast and from her left breast, and came before her and said : " Peace be with you, O Mother ogress." She said : " Had not your greeting preceded your words I would have eaten your flesh before your bones. Where are you going, O clever Muhammad ? " He said : " I am going to bring the singing rose of 'Arab-Zandiq." She showed him the way and said to him : " You will come to a palace before which a goat and a dog are tethered. Before the goat is meat and before the dog is clover. Take the meat from before the goat and throw it before the dog ; take the clover and throw it before the goat. Then the gate will open for you and you will go in and pick the rose. Then go out at once and do not look back, for if you do you will be bewitched and turned to stone like the other ones who have been bewitched in that place." The clever Muhammad went and did as the ogress had told him. He picked the rose and went out of the gate, put back the meat before the goat and the clover before

the dog. He carried off the rose and gave it to his sister. Then he went to the king again. The king greeted him and said : " Where have you been, O clever one ? Why have you been away from me so long ? He answered : " I was ill, O king." He took him and went into the garden with him, and they sat together. The king's wife looked out of the window and saw them sitting together. She sent for the old woman and struck her a violent blow and said : " Are you laughing at me, old woman ? " She answered : " Be patient with me for three days more." She mounted her pitcher and went to the girl and said to her : " Did your brother bring you the rose ? " She answered : " Yes, but it does not sing." The old woman said : " It only sings before its mirror," and she went away.

When her brother came he found her unhappy, and said to her : " Why are you unhappy, my sister ? " She said : " I want the mirror of the rose, without which it will not sing." He said : " It is well. I am ready. I will bring it to you." He mounted his horse and went to the ogress. She asked : " What do you want, O clever Muhammad ? " He said : " I want the mirror of the rose." She said : " It is well. Do as you did last time with the dog and the goat. When you go into the garden you will find a staircase. Go up the stairs and in the first room you will find the mirror hanging on the wall. Take it and go out at once and do not look back. If the earth trembles while you are there, make your heart hard ; otherwise you will have gone in vain." The clever Muhammad went as the ogress had told him and took the mirror. The earth trembled, but he made his heart as hard as an anvil and its trembling did not trouble him.

He carried off the mirror and gave it to his sister. She put it by the rose, but the rose did not sing. He went to the king, who said to him : " Where have you been, O clever one ? " He said : " I was away with my father travelling somewhere ; now I have come back." The king took him and went into the garden. The king's wife saw him and sent for the old woman and said to her : " Are you laughing at me, old woman ? " She answered : " Be patient with me for three days more, O Queen. This time it will be the beginning and the end." Then she mounted her pitcher and went to the girl and said to her : " Did your brother bring you the mirror ? " She answered : " Yes, but the rose does not sing." She said : " It only sings with its mistress, whose name is 'Arab-Zandiq.' " Then she left

her and went away. The boy went and found his sister unhappy. He asked her : " Why are you unhappy, my sister ? " She answered : " I want 'Arab-Zandiq, the mistress of the rose and the mirror, so that they may sing to me and I may take pleasure in them when I sit alone." He mounted his horse and went to the ogress and said to her : " How are you, Mother ogress ? " She said : " What else do you want, O clever Muhammad ? " He answered : " I want 'Arab-Zandiq, the mistress of the rose and the mirror." She said : " O clever Muhammad, kings and pashas were not able to bring her, and they were all bewitched and turned into stone. You are still young and poor, and what will happen to you ? " He said : " Just show me the way, O mother ogress, and I will bring her with the permission of God." She said : " Go to the west of the palace and you will find an open window. Put your horse's head against the wall and shout with all your might and say to her : ' Come down, O 'Arab-Zandiq ! ' " The clever Muhammad went and stood beneath the window. He put the horse's head against the window and shouted : " Come down, O 'Arab-Zandiq ! " She looked out and cursed him and said : " Go away, O youth." The clever Muhammad looked and saw that half the horse had turned to stone. He shouted again with all his might : " Come down, O 'Arab-Zandiq ! " She cursed him and said : " I told you to go away, O youth." He looked and saw that his horse was bewitched and half of himself too. He shouted again with all his might and said : " I told you to come down, O 'Arab-Zandiq ! " She leaned half out of the window, and her hair reached the ground. The clever Muhammad seized her hair, rolled it round his hand, pulled her and threw her on to the ground. She said : " You are destined for me, O clever Muhammad. Let go my hair, by the life of the king your father." He said to her : " My father is not a king ; my father is a fisherman." She said : " No, your father is the king, and later I will tell you his story." He said : " I will not let go your hair until you set free all these bewitched men." She made a sign with her right hand and they were set free. They came rushing to the clever Muhammad, wishing to take her from him. But some of them said : " Thanks be to him who saved us. Do you wish to take her from him ? " So they left him and went away. She took him and went into her castle and ordered her servants to go and build a palace in the middle of the fisherman's island. The servants went and built the palace. She took the

clever Muhammad and she and her army departed. She said to him : " Go to the king, and when he asks you where you have been, say : ' I am arranging my wedding, and you and your army are invited.' " The clever Muhammad went to the king, who said to him : " Where have you been, O clever one ? " He answered : " I was preparing for my wedding, and I have come to invite you and all your army." The king laughed and said to the vizier : " This boy is the son of a fisherman, and he comes to invite me and my army." The vizier said : " For the sake of your love for him, let us command the army to take eight days' food with them, and we too will take our food." The king ordered them to prepare the army with eight days' food, and they went to the fisherman's son. The army found fine tents raised. The king was astonished. Then food was brought to them, cakes and meat, and as soon as the dish before them was finished another one was brought. The soldiers said to one another : " If only we could stay here for two years and eat meat instead of eating beans and lentils ! " They stayed for exactly forty days until the wedding was over, and they were well content with the food. The king and his army went, and he said to the vizier : " We would like to invite them as they have invited us "—and he sent them an invitation. 'Arab-Zandiq sent her soldiers, and they filled the town until no place was found for them and they were scattered amongst the peasants so that they might be fed. Then 'Arab-Zandiq went with the girl and the clever Muhammad, and they entered the palace. As they were going up the stairs 'Arab-Zandiq saw the mother of the clever Muhammad coated with pitch and shackled. She threw a cashmere shawl over her and covered her. The servants who were standing there asked her : " Why do you cover her with the shawl ? Spit on her when you go up and again when you come down." She asked them why. They said : " Because she bore the king two dogs." The servants went and brought news to the king, saying : " A lady of the guests has thrown a shawl over the one who stands by the stairs. She covered her and does not spit on her." The king met her and asked : " Why did you cover her ? " She said : " Let her be taken to the baths and cleansed and dressed in royal clothes and later I will tell you her story."

The king gave orders and they took her to the baths and cleansed her and dressed her in royal clothes. Then they led her before them in the divan. The king said to 'Arab-Zandiq :

"Now tell me her story." She said : "Listen, O king and the fisherman will speak." Then 'Arab-Zandiq asked the fisherman : "Did your wife bear the clever Muhammad and his sister at one time or separately ?" The fisherman answered : "My wife has borne no children." She said : "Then where did you get them ?" He answered : "I went down one morning to fish, and I found them in a casket in the river. I took them and my wife reared them." 'Arab-Zandiq said : "Do you hear, O king ?" He said to the woman : "Are these your children, woman ?" She said : "Let them bare their heads, that I may see." The children bared their heads and they found alternate hairs of gold and hyacinth. Then the king asked : "Are these your children ?" She said : "Let them weep. If it thunders and rains they are my children, but if it does not thunder or rain they are not my children." The children wept and it thundered and rained. They said to her : "Are these your children ?" She said : "Let them laugh. If the moon rises with the sun they are my children." The children laughed, and the moon rose with the sun. They said to her : "Are these your children ?" She answered : "They are my children and the issue of my womb." Then the king gave orders and made the fisherman his vizier of the right hand and ordered that the city be illuminated for exactly forty days. On the last day he brought his wife and the old midwife. He had them burnt in fire and scattered to the winds.

INDIA

ANY layman wishing for some elementary knowledge of Indian literature, and examples of Indian prose classics, will find himself confronted with difficulties. The varying languages, to which must be added the fact that there is little available in the way of a simple introduction to the continent's literary history. To-day, of course, India is but a geographical termination for what once included Pakistan and even Burma. The classic literature of Ancient India is Sanskrit, and the pioneer scholar who introduced that language to Western civilisation was Sir William Jones (1746-94), and he was closely followed by Henry Colebrooke (1765-1837). Early Sanskrit literature was devoted to the *Vedas*—of which the *Rig-Veda* is the most famous. Of the earliest stories the “*Jataka*” or Buddhist birth stories were known around the fourth century B.C. Two centuries later came the great collection of fables, “*The Panchatantra*,” which were derived from Buddhist sources. Their fame spread to Persia into which language they were translated.¹ The *Panchatantra* was intended for the instruction of the young. But the youthful pupils were evidently not intended to be Brahmin boys either solely or mainly; tradition enshrined in the *Panchatantra* itself asserts its composition for the instruction of the sons of a prince, and with this accords the use of Sanskrit, for at the probable time of its first production, Sanskrit was already essentially the language of the Brahmins and of the high official classes in the Royal entourage.² The *Panchatantra* consists of five books, the tales are both varied and dissimilar giving one a very wide choice from which to choose. Undoubtedly they were the predecessors of Fontaine.

The other Hindu contribution is from the admirable translation made by Burton of the *Hetata-panchavincati*, or Twenty-five tales of the *Vetala*. These Hindu tales are also of Buddhist origin, and are again a collection of tales threaded together and told by a single raconteur. In this case a most fantastic vampire.

In choosing stories from the vernacular another vast field is available. One of the oldest is Tamil, the language of the Dravidians who now inhabit Southern India. Here, again, we can find a collection of tales held together by a raconteur—in this case a minister's son. The story chosen is from the *Madanakamarajankadai*—or Dravidian Nights. The authorship of these tales is lost in

¹ See Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, p. 369.

² Keith Bornele, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, 1928. See “*The Didactic Fable*,” p. 242 *et seq.*

obscurity, for the Tamil literature is as old as any and these tales, were doubtless handed down by word of mouth long before they came to be written.

A further fable is also included from the Punjab—now Pakistan.

The strange story of "A Bear Marries a Girl" is a Dardu tale. The Dards were an Aryan race inhabiting the country round Gilgit, between Kashmir and the Hindū Kush. They are descendants of Sanskrit writers and possess their own beliefs and festivals.³

Lastly a story from Bengal by India's great philosopher-poet, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). He was a member of a distinguished and influential family who belonged to a community known as the Pirali Brahmans. These Brahmans lost caste because it is said they associated with Moslems. Rabindranath was born at the family residence at Jorasanko. He travelled extensively and wrote prolifically. His first translation into English was his poem "Gitanjali." Though a mystic he was no advocate of asceticism. He said, "My religion is the reconciliation in my own individual being of the superpersonal man, the universal human spirit." The story chosen, "Hungry Stones," is from his earliest collection of Bengali stories.

³ See Hastings, *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. iv.



THE THREE-BREASTED PRINCESS

THERE was a city in the north country, and the king's name was Honey-Host. Now the queen gave birth to a daughter, and she had three breasts. As soon as the king heard of it he summoned the chamberlain and said: "Let this child be exposed in the forest, that not a soul may know of the matter." The chamberlain replied: "O king, it is well known that a three-breasted daughter is a source of misfortune. Therefore let the learned Brahmans be summoned and consulted, that you do no wrong in the sight of God or man."

The king acted on his advice, sent for the Brahmans, and said to them: "Brahmans, a daughter with three breasts has been born to me. Is there any remedy for the misfortune, or not?" They replied: "O king, listen. A daughter that is born wanting a limb, or having a limb too many, will be the death of her husband, and the author of her own disgrace. Likewise, she that is born with three breasts will speedily bring destruction upon her father. Of that there is no doubt. Therefore remove her from your sight. If anyone will marry her, let him have her, by all means, on condition that he quits the

country. By so doing you will have acted wisely, and will be guiltless in the sight of everyone."

On hearing their opinion, the king ordered the drum to be beaten, and the following proclamation made throughout the city : "Let it be known that a princess has been born with three breasts. Whoever marries her, to him will the king give one hundred thousand gold pieces, on condition that he goes into exile with her." But a long time elapsed after the proclamation had been made, and no one would marry the princess. She was brought up in secret, and so attained to the first stage of womanhood.

Now in that city was a blind man, and he had as a companion a hunchback, who walked with a staff. When they heard the proclamation they consulted together and said : "Whoever taps the drum gets the girl and the gold. With the money we could live at our ease, and if we met our death through any fault of the princess it would put an end to the misery attendant on this poverty."

After their consultation the blind man went and struck the drum, saying : "I will marry the girl." Thereupon the officers reported to the king : "O king, a blind man has struck the drum. The decision rests with your majesty." The king replied : "Whether he be blind, deaf, a leper, or an outcast, let him take the girl and the gold. But see that he is banished the country."

Acting on his command, the king's officers conducted the princess to the shore of the river, saw her married to the blind man, and handed up to him the hundred thousand gold pieces. Then, putting them all into a fishing-boat, they said to the fisherman : "Take this blind man, with his wife and the hunchback, to a foreign land, and see them safely settled in some city or other." So they all went to a foreign country, and lodged in a certain city. Out of the money they bought a house, and lived comfortably. The blind man spent most of his time dozing on a couch, while the hunchback did the house-work.

In course of time the princess intrigued with the hunchback and said : "Beloved, if only this blind man were put out of the way we two could live happily together. Get some poison from somewhere, so that we can kill him. Then I shall be happy."

Now one day the hunchback found a dead black snake. In great glee he took it home to the princess and said to her : "My

dear, I have found this black snake. Cut it up, cook it with seasoning, and give it to the blind man, telling him it is fish. He will soon die after eating it." With this the hunchback started off to market.

So the princess cut up the snake, put it in the kettle with buttermilk, and set it over the fire. Then, as she was busy with her housework, with feigned affection she said to her husband : " My dear, I am cooking some fish for your dinner to-day—what you like. Just take this spoon and stir it for a moment, while I get on with my housework." On hearing this he stood up at once, joyfully licking his lips, and, with the spoon, proceeded to stir.

But as he did so the poisoned steam from the kettle reached his eyes and began to dissolve the film that covered them. Perceiving the efficacy of the vapour, he held his head farther over, and when his vision cleared he saw nothing but chopped snake in the kettle. And he thought : " Well, what is this ? To my face she said it was fish ; but this is chopped snake. Now I will just find out for certain whether this is the doings of the princess, or a plot to kill me on the part of the hunchback, or anyone else."

With this in mind he concealed his intentions, and went on stirring as usual. At that moment the hunchback returned, and, without hesitation, began to kiss and embrace the princess. The blind man saw it all, and looked about for a knife. Not seeing one, he approached the hunchback in the old manner, seized him suddenly by the feet, and, mustering all his strength, whirled him round his head and dashed him hard upon the bosom of the three-breasted woman. With the force of the blow her third breast was driven in, and the hump on his back was straightened out.

THE PUNISHED ONION-THIEF

IN a certain city a thief was caught in the act of stealing onions. Then the constables took him and bound him, and brought him before the king's court of justice. On hearing the evidence the magistrates said to him : " Now, my good fellow, you either pay a fine of one hundred rupees, receive one hundred lashes with the whip, or eat one hundred onions. We will not let you free otherwise."

The stupid fellow replied : " I will eat the onions." So he set about the task. But when he had eaten seven or eight bunches of onions, which were very hot and pungent, with water streaming from his eyes, mouth and nostrils, he cried : " I cannot eat them. Neither can I pay the hundred rupees. Therefore I prefer to have the lashes."

But after they had given him a few strokes with the whip he began to bawl at the top of his voice : " Stop, stop ! I cannot endure this. Help, help ! I'll pay the hundred rupees, and the interest."

So he made himself the common laughing-stock ; for he burnt his mouth well with the onions, received a good whipping and had to pay the fine into the bargain.

LEAP AND CREEP

IN the palace of a certain king stood an incomparable bed, excellent in every respect. Concealed in the coverlet lived a louse named Creep. Surrounded by her sons and grandsons, daughters and granddaughters (a mighty host) she used to bite the flesh of the king, and drink his royal blood, as he lay asleep. On this diet she grew quite plump and handsome.

One day a flea, named Leap, drifted in on the wind and dropped on the bed. The sight of it thrilled him with joy—the embroidered coverlet, double pillow, the softness and delicious perfume. Charmed with the sheer delight of touching it, he hopped this way and that until by chance he met Creep.

On seeing him she said sharply: “Where did *you* come from? This is the royal bedstead. Get out of it this moment.” “Madam,” replied Leap, “pray don’t speak to me in this manner. I am your guest. I have sucked the blood of all sorts and conditions of people—high and low, rich and poor, from the greatest to the least. By your favour I should like to sample that of the lucky sleeper in this bed, which must be as charming and sweet as nectar.”

Creep said: “That is out of the question for fiery-mouthed stingers like you. Get out of the bed!” Then he fell at her feet and repeated his request, and she very graciously consented to grant him the favour.

“But,” said she, “you must observe the proper place and time before you come to dinner.” He asked: “Which is the right place, and what the proper time?” And she replied: “Wait till the king, overcome with wine or fatigue, falls sound asleep; then bite him quietly about the feet. That is the proper place and time.”

To this Leap assented. But, in spite of the arrangement, immediately the king lay down to sleep in the early evening, not knowing the time, and being half-famished, he bit him fiercely on the back. And the poor king, as though he had been touched with a torch, burned with a firebrand, or stung by a

scorpion, sprang up suddenly, rubbing his back, and cried to a servant: "Rascal! Something has bitten me. Search the bed thoroughly till you find the insect."

But when the servants arrived with the lamp and made a search, as the king had bidden them, they found Creep lurking in the nap of the fabric, and killed her with her family.

THE MONK AND THE SWINDLER

IN a certain district, in a secluded spot, stood a monastery. In it lived a monk named Godly. By the sale of fine cloths and garments that had been given him by those for whom he performed rites and ceremonies, in time he amassed a considerable treasure. As a result he would not trust anyone, but, day and night, kept his money securely tucked up under his arm.

Now a cunning swindler named June spied the treasure and thought to himself : " How can I steal that money from him ? Owing to the great strength of the walls I cannot force an entrance to his cell. And the door is too high for me to climb over. So I will practise deceit, and induce him to admit me as a pupil. In this way I shall gain his confidence and get him in my power."

With this purpose in view he approached Godly, and, after greeting him, and quoting a passage of scripture, fell on his face, clasped Godly's feet, and said deferentially : " Holy sir, pray do me the favour of imposing the vow."

Godly said : " My son, I will grant you the favour. But you must not enter my cell after nightfall, because we monks are forbidden to associate with anyone. Therefore, after taking the vow, you must sleep in a hut of grass near the monastery gate."

June replied : " Holy sir, I will do as you bid me, and faithfully follow your command."

Accordingly, at bed-time, Godly performed the usual ceremony, and admitted June to discipleship. He made his master happy by rubbing his hands and feet, supplying him with palm-leaves for writing, and so on. But Godly kept his money safe and tight under his arm.

As things went on for some time in this manner June thought : " Dear me ! I don't know why it is, but he doesn't trust me. Then what am I to do ? Shall I take a knife and kill him in broad daylight ? Or give him a dose of poison ? Or shall I butcher him as we slaughter a beast ? "

As he was considering the matter the son of a pupil of Godly's arrived from the village with an invitation and said : " Reverend sir, pray come to our house and perform a ceremony." On hearing it Godly set out and took June with him.

Now as they journeyed they came to a river. Thereupon Godly took the money from under his arm, wrapped it in an old patched garment, and, after muttering a prayer to the god, said to June : " June, keep watch over this robe and offering, and guard it carefully till I return again." With this he went off somewhere. June waited till he was well out of sight, then seized the money and ran away with it.

THE RAMS AND THE JACKAL

FULLY absorbed with his pupil's good qualities, Godly forgot about his money, and, quite unconcerned, sat down to rest. As he waited he saw two rams fighting in the midst of a flock. In blind rage they would retire some distance and then charge together again, battering each other with their broad foreheads till the blood spurted out and fell upon the ground. Watching his opportunity, a greedy jackal ran and stood between them, licking up the blood.

On seeing it Godly thought : " Well, well ! Yonder jackal is very stupid. If he gets in the way of those two when they butt together he will certainly be killed. There is no escaping the inference."

Shortly afterwards, in exactly the same manner, greedily licking up the blood, and failing to get out of the way as the two rams crashed together, the jackal was caught between them and killed. Sorrowing at his fate, Godly thereupon set out to recover his treasure.

Approaching the spot very leisurely he could see nothing of June. Finally, however, he spied the robe lying on the ground ; but when he examined it there was no money in it. Then crying : " Oh, oh ! I have been robbed," he fell to the earth in a swoon. A moment afterwards he came to himself, sprang upon his feet, and began to scream : " June, June ! You roguish cheat ! Where are you gone ? Answer me." After many complaints of this sort, muttering : " It was my own fault ; I have been tricked by June," he went slowly on his way, trying to follow his disciple's footprints.

THE WEAVER AND THE BARBER'S WIFE

As he walked along he saw a weaver, who, with his wife, was on his way to a neighbouring city to obtain liquor, so he called out to him : " Good sir, I come to you as an evening guest, and I don't know a soul in this village. Pray give me food and drink, and a lodging for the night."

On hearing it the weaver said to his wife : " My dear, go home with this stranger, treat him kindly, and give him water to wash his feet, food and a bed for the night. And remain indoors yourself ; I will bring you plenty of wine and meat."

So his wife set out for home with Godly, and she was in great glee, for she was a gay woman, and had a certain lover in mind. When she arrived there she offered Godly a broken-down cot, and said : " Holy sir, a friend of mine has just come from the village, and I must speak with her. I shall be back again soon. Meanwhile you may remain here ; but see that you behave yourself." With this she put on her best clothes and set out to find her swain.

She had not gone far before she came face to face with her husband, who was returning home with a pot of liquor. He was staggering drunk ; his hair fell over his face, and he reeled at every step. At the sight of him she quickly turned back and ran indoors, took off her finery, and remained as usual. The weaver saw her running away, and observed that she had on her best clothes, and since he had heard the tales of gossips that went the rounds concerning her, his heart was troubled, and he fell into a passion. So he went indoors and cried to her : " Ah, wicked woman ! Where were you going when I saw you ? "

She replied : " Since I left you and came home I have not been out anywhere. Why do you talk this drunken twaddle ? "

Stung with her contradiction, and noting her changed dress, he said : " You hussy ! For a long time I have heard tales of your misconduct. To-day I have proof of it. Now I am going to give you the punishment you deserve." So saying, he beat her with a club, then bound her firmly to a post, and fell into a drunken slumber.

At this point her friend, the barber's wife, learning that the weaver was asleep, came to her and said : " My dear, your lover is waiting for you where you promised to meet him. Go at once." She replied : " Just see the condition I am in. How

can I go to him ? You return and tell my lover that I cannot possibly meet him on this occasion."

The barber's wife replied : " My dear, it is nonsense to talk in this manner. Pluck up your courage, and don't disappoint the good fellow."

She answered : " That is all very well. But tell me how I am to go to him, firmly bound as I am, and my brute of a husband lying here beside me ? " The barber's wife said : " My dear, he is helpless with drink, and will not stir till the sun rises. Therefore I will set you free, and bind myself in your place. But you must make haste back again when you have seen your lover."

So she did this. Shortly afterwards the weaver, whose anger was somewhat appeased, though he was still the worse for liquor rose up and said to the barber's wife, bound to the post : " Look here, you nagger ! If from this time forth you will stay at home, and leave off scolding, I will set you free."

But the barber's wife, fearful lest her voice should betray her, made no reply. And when he repeated the offer she was afraid to utter a word. Then, enraged at her silence, he took a sharp knife and cut off her nose. And he said : " Now stay where you are. I shall not try to please you again." Muttering this he fell asleep. And Godly, being restless through hunger, and grief for the loss of his money, was a witness of all the women did.

Presently the weaver's wife, after meeting her lover, returned home and said to the barber's wife : " Well, my dear, are you all right ? Did that brute stir at all while I was away ? " And the barber's wife replied : " I am all right except my nose, and that, you see is missing. Make haste and set me free before he wakes up, so that I may go home. Otherwise he will do something worse—cut off my ears, or commit further atrocities."

Thereupon the weaver's wife set her friend free, re-bound herself to the post, and cried reproachfully to her husband : " Oh, you great simpleton ! I am a faithful wife, and a highly virtuous woman. Who, do you think, would be able to violate or disfigure me ! I call the gods to witness my innocence ; and now, if I am a pure woman, may they make my nose grow exactly as it was before. But if I have so much as a secret desire for a strange man, may they reduce me to ashes ! "

After this outburst she said to him further : " Look, you villain ! By virtue of my chastity my nose has become as it

was before." And when he took a torch and examined her, he saw her nose exactly as it was originally, and a great pool of blood lying on the floor. Then, in amazement, he set her free from the post, and consoled her with a hundred wheedling endearments. And Godly saw it all, and was astounded at her readiness of wit and her impudence. And he thought : " All the cleverness of the gods above and below cannot rival the wit of a woman. Then how should one protect himself against her ? "

As the holy man lay meditating upon this the night dragged wearily by. Meanwhile the barber's wife went home, with her nose cut off, and she reflected : " What is to be done now ? How can I conceal this great disfigurement ? "

While she pondered thus her husband was spending the night at the king's palace, in the pursuit of his trade. Early in the morning he came home, and, being eager to attend to his city business, stood at the door and called to her : " My dear, bring me my razor-case at once, so that I can proceed to my work in the city."

But his artful wife, who had lost her nose, suddenly thought of a plan. Remaining indoors, she tossed him one razor only. And the barber, enraged at not receiving the entire case, picked up the razor and threw it back at her. This gave her the opportunity she desired. Raising her hands to heaven, she ran screaming from the house and cried : " Oh, oh, oh ! Look ! This ruffian has cut off my nose. I was a true and faithful wife to him. Help, help ! "

Thereupon the king's men ran up, beat the barber till he could not stand, bound him fast, and took him off to court with his wife, who was minus her nose. When they arrived the judges asked him : " Why did you commit this ghastly outrage upon your wife ? " And when he made no reply (for his wits were addled with astonishment) they quoted from the law book and said : " The prisoner is evidently guilty. For assaulting a woman the penalty is death. Let him be impaled."

But Godly, seeing him led to the place of execution, approached the judges and said : " Sirs, it is not right that this wretched barber should be put to death. He has done nothing amiss. Pray listen to these words of mine :

June robbed me of my hoarded gain,
The jackal by the rams was slain,
This meddling wench would interfere ;
For our own faults we suffer here.

The judges said: "Holy sir, how was that?" Then Godly related at length what had happened to all three. They listened to him in amazement, and set the barber at liberty. And they said: "It was through her own fault that she lost her nose. Our sentence is that her ears also be now cut off; this is her punishment according to the law."

So the king's officers did this. And Godly, consoling his spirit with the three examples, returned to his own monastery.

THE THIEF WHO LAUGHED AND WEPT

[King *Vikram* (*A King Arthur of the East*) has captured the Vampire (*Baital*) who proceeds to tell him a number of tales, escaping after each story when the King and his young son question him upon the morals of the tale. This is the Vampire's Fifth Story.]

YOUR majesty (quoth the demon, with unusual politeness), there is a country called Malaya, on the western coast of the land of Bharat—you see that I am particular in specifying the place—and in it was a city known as Chandrodaya, whose king was named Randhir.

This Raja, like most others of his semi-deified order, had been in youth what is called a *Sarva-rasi*; ¹ that is, he ate and drank and listened to music, and looked at dancers and made love much more than he studied, reflected, prayed, or conversed with the wise. After the age of thirty he began to reform, and he brought such zeal to the good cause, that in an incredibly short space of time he came to be accounted and quoted as the paragon of correct Rajas. This was very praiseworthy. Many of Brahma's vicegerents on earth, be it observed, have loved food and drink, and music and dancing, and the worship of Kama, to the end of their days.

Amongst his officers was Gunshankar, a magistrate of police, who, curious to say, was as honest as he was just. He administered equity with as much care before as after dinner; he took no bribes even in the matter of advancing his family; he was rather merciful than otherwise to the poor, and he never punished the rich ostentatiously in order to display his and his law's disrespect for persons. Besides which, when sitting on the carpet of justice, he did not, as some Kotwals do, use rough or angry language to those who cannot reply; nor did he take offence when none was intended.

All the people of the city Chandrodaya, in the province of Malaya, on the western coast of Bharatland, loved and esteemed this excellent magistrate; which did not, however, prevent

¹ Literally, "one of all tastes"—a wild or gay man, we should say.

thefts being committed so frequently, and so regularly, that no one felt his property secure. At last the merchants who had suffered most from these depredations went in a body before Gunshankar, and said to him :

" O flower of the law ! robbers have exercised great tyranny upon us, so great indeed that we can no longer stay in this city."

Then the magistrate replied, " What has happened, has happened. But in future you shall be free from annoyance. I will make due preparation for these thieves."

Thus saying Gunshankar called together his various delegates, and directed them to increase the number of their people. He pointed out to them how they should keep watch by night ; besides which he ordered them to open registers of all arrivals and departures, to make themselves acquainted by means of spies with the movements of every suspected person in the city, and to raise a body of paggis (trackers), who could follow the footprints of thieves even when they wore thieving shoes,² till they came up with and arrested them. And lastly, he gave the patrols full power, whenever they might catch a robber in the act, to slay him without asking questions.

People in numbers began to mount guard throughout the city every night, but, notwithstanding this, robberies continued to be committed. After a time all the merchants having again met together went before the magistrate, and said, " O incarnation of justice ! you have changed your officers, you have hired watchmen, and you have established patrols : nevertheless the thieves have not diminished, and plundering is ever taking place."

Thereupon Gunshankar carried them to the palace, and made them lay their petition at the feet of king Randhir. That Raja, having consoled them, sent them home saying, " Be ye of good cheer. I will to-night adopt a new plan, which, with the blessing of the Bhagwan, shall free ye from further anxiety."

Observe, O Vikram, that Randhir was one of those concerning whom the poet sang—

The unwise run from one end to the other.

Not content with becoming highly respectable, correct and even unimpeachable in point of character, he reformed even his reformation, and he did much more than he was required to do.

² These shoes are generally made of rags and bits of leather ; they have often toes behind the foot, with other similar contrivances, yet they scarcely ever deceive an experienced man.

When Canopus began to sparkle gaily in the southern skies, the king arose and prepared for a night's work. He disguised his face by smearing it with a certain paint, by twirling his moustachios up to his eyes, by parting his beard upon his chin, and conducting the two ends towards his ears, and by tightly tying a hair from a horse's tail over his nose, so as quite to change its shape. He then wrapped himself in a coarse outer garment, girt his loins, buckled on his sword, drew his shield upon his arm, and without saying a word to those within the palace, he went out into the streets alone, and on foot.

It was dark, and Raja Randhir walked through the silent city for nearly an hour without meeting anyone. As, however, he passed through a back street in the merchants' quarter, he saw what appeared to be a homeless dog, lying at the foot of a house-wall. He approached it, and up leaped a human figure, whilst a loud voice cried, "Who art thou?"

Randhir replied, "I am a thief; who art thou?"

"And I also am a thief," rejoined the other, much pleased at hearing this; "come, then, and let us make together. But what art thou, a high-toper or a lully-prigger?"³

"A little more ceremony between coves in the lorst,"⁴ whispered the king, speaking as a flash man, "were not out of place. But, look sharp, mind old Oliver,⁵ or the lamb-skin man⁶ will have the pull of us, and as sure as eggs is eggs we shall be scragged as soon as lagged."⁷

"Well, keep your red rag⁸ quiet," grumbled the other, "and let us be working."

Then the pair, king and thief, began work in right earnest. The gang seemed to swarm in the street. They were drinking spirits, slaying victims, rubbing their bodies with oil, daubing their eyes with lamp-black, and repeating incantations to enable them to see in the darkness; others were practising the lessons of the god with the golden spear,⁹ and carrying out the four modes of breaching a house: 1. Picking out burnt bricks. 2. Cutting through unbaked ones when old, when softened by recent damp, by exposure to the sun, or by saline exudations.

³ The high-toper is a swell thief, the other is a low dog.

⁴ Engaged in shoplifting.

⁵ The moon.

⁶ The judge.

⁷ To be lagged is to be taken; scragging is hanging.

⁸ The tongue.

⁹ This is the god Kartikeya, a mixture of Mars and Mercury, who revealed to a certain Yugacharya the scriptures known as "Chauriya-Vidya"—Anglicè, "Thieves' Manual." The classical robbers of the Hindu drama always perform according to its precepts. There is another work respected by thieves, and called the "Chora-Pancha-shika," because consisting of fifty lines.

3. Throwing water on a mud wall; and 4. Boring through one of wood. The sons of Skanda were making breaches in the shape of lotus blossoms, the sun, the new moon, the lake, and the water jar, and they seemed to be anointed with magic unguents, so that no eye could behold, no weapon harm them.

At length having filled his bag with costly plunder, the thief said to the king, "Now, my rummy cove, we'll be off to the flash ken, where the lads and the morts are waiting to wet their whistles."

Randhir, who as a king was perfectly familiar with "thieves' Latin," took heart, and resolved to hunt out the secrets of the den. On the way, his companion, perfectly satisfied with the importance which the new cove had attached to a rat-hole,¹⁰ and convinced that he was a true robber, taught him the whistle, the word, and the sign peculiar to the gang, and promised him that he would smack the lit¹¹ that night before "turning in."

So saying the thief rapped twice at the city gate, which was at once opened to him, and preceding his accomplice led the way to a rock about two kos (four miles) distant from the walls. Before entering the dark forest at the foot of the eminence, the robber stood still for a moment and whistled twice through his fingers with a shrill scream that rang through the silent glades. After a few minutes the signal was answered by the hooting of an owl, which the robber acknowledged by shrieking like a jackal. Thereupon half a dozen armed men arose from their crouching places in the grass, and one advanced towards the new-comers to receive the sign. It was given, and they both passed on, whilst the guard sank, as it were, into the bowels of the earth. All these things Randhir carefully remarked: besides which he neglected not to take note of all the distinguishable objects that lay on the road, and, when he entered the wood, he scratched with his dagger all the tree trunks within reach.

After a sharp walk the pair reached a high perpendicular sheet of rock, rising abruptly from a clear space in the jungle, and profusely printed over with vermilion hands. The thief, having walked up to it, and made his obeisance, stooped to the ground, and removed a bunch of grass. The two then raised by their united efforts a heavy trap-door, through which poured a stream of light, whilst a confused hubbub of voices was heard below.

"This is the ken," said the robber, preparing to descend a

¹⁰ Supposed to be a good omen.

¹¹ Share the booty.

thin ladder of bamboo, "follow me!" And he disappeared with his bag of valuables.

The king did as he was bid, and the pair entered together a large hall, or rather a cave, which presented a singular spectacle. It was lighted up by links fixed to the sombre walls, which threw a smoky glare over the place, and the contrast after the deep darkness reminded Randhir of his mother's descriptions of Patal-puri, the infernal city. Carpets of every kind, from the choicest tapestry to the coarsest rug, were spread upon the ground, and were strewed with bags, wallets, weapons, heaps of booty, drinking cups, and all the materials of debauchery.

Passing through this cave the thief led Randhir into another, which was full of thieves, preparing for the pleasures of the night. Some were changing garments, ragged and dirtied by creeping through gaps in the houses; others were washing the blood from their hands and feet; these combed out their long dishevelled, dusty hair; those anointed their skins with perfumed cocoa-nut oil. There were all manner of murderers present, a villainous collection of Kartikeya's and Bhawani's ¹² crew. There were stabbers with their poniards hung to lanyards lashed round their naked waists, Dhaturiya-poisoners ¹³ distinguished by the little bag slung under the left arm, and Phansigars ¹⁴ wearing their fatal kerchiefs round their necks. And Randhir had reason to thank the good deed in the last life that had sent him there in such strict disguise, for amongst the robbers he found, as might be expected, a number of his own people, spies and watchmen, guards and patrols.

The thief, whose importance of manner now showed him to be the chief of the gang, was greeted with applause as he entered the robing room, and he bade all make salaam to the new companion. A number of questions concerning the success of the night's work was quickly put and answered: then the company, having got ready for the revel, flocked into the first cave. There they sat down each in his own place, and began to eat and drink and make merry.

After some hours the flaring torches began to burn out, and drowsiness to overpower the strongest heads. Most of the robbers rolled themselves up in the rugs, and covering their

¹² Bhawani is one of the many forms of the destroying goddess, the wife of Shiva.

¹³ Wretches who kill with the narcotic seed of the stramonium.

¹⁴ Better known as "Thugs," which in India means simply "rascals."

heads went to sleep. A few still sat with their backs to the wall, nodding drowsily or leaning on one side, and too stupefied with opium and hemp to make any exertion.

At that moment a servant woman, whom the king saw for the first time, came into the cave, and looking at him exclaimed, "O Raja ! how came you with these wicked men ? Do you run away as fast as you can, or they will surely kill you when they awake."

"I do not know the way ; in which direction am I to go ?" asked Randhir.

The woman then showed him the road. He threaded the confused mass of snorers, treading with the foot of a tiger-cat, found the ladder, raised the trap-door by exerting all his strength, and breathed once more the open air of heaven. And before plunging into the depths of the wood, he again marked the place where the entrance lay, and carefully replaced the bunch of grass.

Hardly had Raja Randhir returned to the palace, and removed the traces of his night's occupation, when he received a second deputation of the merchants, complaining bitterly and with the longest faces about their fresh misfortunes.

"O pearl of equity !" said the men of money, "but yesterday you consoled us with the promise of some contrivance by the blessing of which our houses and coffers would be safe from theft ; whereas our goods have never yet suffered so severely as during the last twelve hours."

Again Randhir dismissed them, swearing that this time he would either die or destroy the wretches who had been guilty of such violence.

Then having mentally prepared his measures, the Raja warned a company of archers to hold themselves in readiness for secret service, and as each one of his own people returned from the robbers' cave, he had him privily arrested and put to death—because the deceased, it is said, do not, like Baitals, tell tales. About nightfall, when he thought that the thieves, having finished their work of plunder, would meet together as usual for wassail and debauchery, he armed himself, marched out his men, and led them to the rock in the jungle.

But the robbers, aroused by the disappearance of the new companion, had made inquiries and had gained intelligence of the impending danger. They feared to flee during the day-time, lest being tracked they should be discovered and destroyed in

detail. When night came they hesitated to disperse, from the certainty that they would be captured in the morning. Then their captain, who throughout had been of one opinion, proposed to them that they should resist, and promised them success if they would hear his words. The gang respected him, for he was known to be brave; they all listened to his advice, and they promised to be obedient.

As young night began to cast transparent shade upon the jungle ground, the chief of the thieves mustered his men, inspected their bows and arrows, gave them encouraging words, and led them forth from the cave. Having placed them in ambush he climbed the rock to espy the movements of the enemy, whilst others applied their noses and ears to the level ground. Presently the moon shone full upon Randhir and his band of archers, who were advancing quickly and carelessly, for they expected to catch the robbers in their cave. The captain allowed them to march nearly through the line of ambush. Then he gave the signal, and at that moment the thieves, rising suddenly from the bush, fell upon the royal troops and drove them back in confusion.

The king also fled, when the chief of the robbers shouted out, "Hola! thou a Rajput and running away from combat?" Randhir hearing this halted, and the two, confronting each other, bared their blades and began to do battle with prodigious fury.

The king was cunning of fence, and so was the thief. They opened the duel, as skilful swordsmen should, by bending almost double, skipping in a circle, each keeping his eye well fixed upon the other, with frowning brows and contemptuous lips; at the same time executing divers gambados and measured leaps, springing forward like frogs and backward like monkeys, and beating time with their sabres upon their shields, which rattled like drums.

Then Randhir suddenly facing his antagonist, cut at his legs with a loud cry, but the thief sprang in the air, and the blade whistled harmlessly under him. Next moment the robber chief's sword thrice whirled round his head, descended like lightning in a slanting direction towards the king's left shoulder: the latter, however, received it upon his target and escaped all hurt, though he staggered with the violence of the blow.

And thus they continued attacking each other, parrying and replying, till their breath failed them and their hands and

wrists were numbed and cramped with fatigue. They were so well matched in courage, strength and address, that neither obtained the least advantage, till the robber's right foot catching a stone slid from under him, and thus he fell to the ground at the mercy of his enemy. The thieves fled, and the Raja, throwing himself on his prize, tied his hands behind him, and brought him back to the city at the point of his good sword.

The next morning Randhir visited his prisoner, whom he caused to be bathed, and washed, and covered with fine clothes. He then had him mounted on a camel and sent him on a circuit of the city, accompanied by a crier proclaiming aloud :

“ Who hears ! who hears ! who hears ! the king commands ! This is the thief who has robbed and plundered the city of Chandrodaya. Let all men therefore assemble themselves together this evening in the open space outside the gate leading towards the sea. And let them behold the penalty of evil deeds, and learn to be wise.”

Randhir had condemned the thief to be crucified,¹⁵ nailed and tied with his hands and feet stretched out at full length, in an erect posture until death ; everything he wished to eat was ordered to him in order to prolong life and misery. And when death should draw near, melted gold was to be poured down his throat till it should burst from his neck and other parts of his body.

In the evening the thief was led out for execution, and by chance the procession passed close to the house of a wealthy landowner. He had a favourite daughter named Shobhani, who was in the flower of her youth and very lovely ; every day she improved, and every moment added to her grace and beauty. The girl had been carefully kept out of sight of mankind, never being allowed outside the high walls of the garden, because her nurse, a wise woman, much trusted in the neighbourhood, had at the hour of death given a solemn warning to her parents. The prediction was that the maiden should be the admiration

¹⁵ Crucifixion, until late years, was common amongst the Buddhists of the Burmese empire. According to an eye-witness, Mr. F. Carey, the punishment was inflicted in two ways. Sometimes criminals were crucified by their hands and feet being nailed to a scaffold ; others were merely tied up, and fed. In these cases the legs and feet of the patient begin to swell and mortify at the expiration of three or four days ; men are said to have lived in this state for a fortnight, and at last they expired from fatigue and mortification. The sufferings from cramp also must be very severe. In India generally impalement was more common than crucifixion.

of the city, and should die a Sati-widow¹⁶ before becoming a wife. From that hour Shobhani was kept as a pearl in its casket by her father, who had vowed never to survive her, and had even fixed upon the place and style of his suicide.

But the shaft of Fate¹⁷ strikes down the vulture sailing above the clouds, and follows the worm into the bowels of the earth, and pierces the fish at the bottom of the ocean—how then can mortal man expect to escape it? As the robber chief, mounted upon the camel, was passing to the cross under the old householder's windows, a fire breaking out in the women's apartments drove the inmates into the rooms looking upon the street.

The hum of many voices arose from the solid pavement of heads: "This is the thief who has been robbing the whole city; let him tremble now, for Randhir will surely crucify him!"

In beauty and bravery of bearing, as in strength and courage, no man in Chandrodaya surpassed the robber, who, being magnificently dressed, looked, despite his disgraceful cavalcade, like the son of a king. He sat with an unmoved countenance, hardly hearing in his pride the scoffs of the mob; calm and steady when the whole city was frenzied with anxiety because of him. But as he heard the word "tremble" his lips quivered, his eyes flashed fire, and deep lines gathered between his eyebrows.

Shobhani started with a scream from the casement behind which she had hid herself, gazing with an intense womanly curiosity into the thoroughfare. The robber's face was upon a level with, and not half a dozen feet from, her pale cheeks. She marked his handsome features, and his look of wrath made her quiver as if it had been a flash of lightning. Then she broke away from the fascination of his youth and beauty, and ran breathless to her father, saying:

"Go this moment and get that thief released!"

The old householder replied: "That thief has been pilfering and plundering the whole city, and by his means the king's archers were defeated; why, then, at my request, should our most gracious Raja Randhir release him?"

Shobhani, almost beside herself, exclaimed: "If by giving up your whole property you can induce the Raja to release him,

¹⁶ Our Suttee. There is an admirable Hindu proverb, which says, "No one knows the ways of woman; she kills her husband and becomes a Sati."

¹⁷ Fate and Destiny are rather Moslem than Hindu fancies.

then instantly so do ; if he does not come to me, I must give up my life ! ”

The maiden then covered her head with her veil, and sat down in the deepest despair, whilst her father, hearing her words, burst into a cry of grief, and hastened to present himself before the Raja. He cried out :

“ O great king, be pleased to receive four lakhs of rupees, and to release this thief.”

But the king replied : “ He has been robbing the whole city, and by reason of him my guards have been destroyed. I cannot by any means release him.”

Then the old householder finding, as he had expected, the Raja inexorable, and not to be moved, either by tears or bribes, or by the cruel fate of the girl, returned home with fire in his heart, and addressed her :

“ Daughter, I have said and done all that is possible ; but it avails me nought with the king. Now, then, we die.”

In the meantime, the guards having led the thief all round the city, took him outside the gates, and made him stand near the cross. Then the messengers of death arrived from the palace, and the executioners began to nail his limbs. He bore the agony with the fortitude of the brave ; but when he heard what had been done by the old householder’s daughter, he raised his voice and wept bitterly, as though his heart had been bursting, and almost with the same breath he laughed heartily as at a feast. All were startled by his merriment ; coming as it did at a time when the iron was piercing his flesh, no man could see any reason for it.

When he died, Shobhani, who was married to him in the spirit, recited to herself these sayings :

“ There are thirty-five millions of hairs on the human body. The woman who ascends the pile with her husband will remain so many years in heaven. As the snake-catcher draws the serpent from his hole, so she, rescuing her husband from hell, rejoices with him ; aye, though he may have sunk to a region of torment, be restrained in dreadful bonds, have reached the place of anguish, be exhausted of strength, and afflicted and tortured for his crimes. No other effectual duty is known for virtuous women at any time after the death of their lords, except casting themselves into the same fire. As long as a woman, in her successive transmigrations, shall decline burning herself, like a faithful wife, in the same fire with her deceased

lord, so long shall she not be exempted from springing again to life in the body of some female animal."

Therefore the beautiful Shobhani, virgin and wife, resolved to burn herself, and make the next life of the thief certain. She showed her courage by thrusting her finger into a torch flame till it became a cinder, and she solemnly bathed in the nearest stream.

A hole was dug in the ground, and upon a bed of green tree-trunks were heaped hemp, pitch, faggots and clarified butter, to form the funeral pyre. The dead body, anointed, bathed, and dressed in new clothes, was then laid upon the heap, which was some two feet high. Shobhani prayed that as long as fourteen Indras reign, or as many years as there are hairs in her head, she might abide in heaven with her husband, and be waited upon by the heavenly dancers. She then presented her ornaments and little gifts of corn to her friends, tied some cotton round both wrists, put two new combs in her hair, painted her forehead, and tied up in the end of her body-cloth clean parched rice¹⁸ and cowrie-shells. These she gave to the bystanders, as she walked seven times round the funeral pyre, upon which lay the body. She then ascended the heap of wood, sat down upon it, and taking the thief's head in her lap, without cords or levers or upper layer of faggots, she ordered the pile to be lighted. The crowd standing around set fire to it in several places, drummed their drums, blew their conchs, and raised a loud cry of "Hari bol! Hari bol!"¹⁹ Straw was thrown on, and pitch and clarified butter were freely poured out. But Shobhani's was a Sahamaran, a blessed easy death: no part of her body was seen to move after the pyre was lighted—in fact, she seemed to die before the flame touched her.

By the blessing of his daughter's decease, the old householder beheaded himself.²⁰ He caused an instrument to be made in the shape of a half-moon, with an edge like a razor, and

¹⁸ Properly speaking, the husbandman should plough with not less than four bullocks; but few can afford this. If he plough with a cow or a bullock, and not with a bull, the rice produced by his ground is unclean, and may not be used in any religious ceremony.

¹⁹ A shout of triumph, like our "Huzza" or "Hurrah!" of late degraded into "Hooray." "Hari bol" is of course religious, meaning "Call upon Hari!" i.e. Krishna, i.e. Vishnu.

²⁰ This form of suicide is one of those recognised in India. So in Europe we read of fanatics who, with a suicidal ingenuity, have succeeded in crucifying themselves.

fitting the back of his neck. At both ends of it, as at the beam of a balance, chains were fastened. He sat down with eyes closed ; he was rubbed with the purifying clay of the holy river, Vaiturani ; ²¹ and he repeated the proper incantations. Then placing his feet upon the extremities of the chains, he suddenly jerked up his neck, and his severed head rolled from his body upon the ground. What a happy death was this !

The Baital was silent, as if meditating on the fortunate transmigration which the old householder had thus secured.

" But what could the thief have been laughing at, sire ? " asked the young prince Dharma Dhwaj of his father.

" At the prodigious folly of the girl, my son," replied the warrior king, thoughtlessly.

" I am indebted once more to your majesty," burst out the Baital, " for releasing me from this unpleasant position, but the Raja's penetration is again at fault. Not to leave your royal son and heir labouring under a false impression, before going I will explain why the brave thief burst into tears, and why he laughed at such a moment.

" He wept when he reflected that he could not requite her kindness in being willing to give up everything she had in the world to save his life ; and this thought deeply grieved him.

" Then it struck him as being passing strange that she had begun to love him when the last sand of his life was well nigh run out ; that wondrous are the ways of the revolving heavens which bestow wealth upon the niggard that cannot use it, wisdom upon the bad man who will misuse it, a beautiful wife upon the fool who cannot protect her, and fertilising showers upon the stony hills. And thinking over these things, the gallant and beautiful thief laughed aloud.

" Before returning to my siras-tree," continued the Vampire, " as I am about to do in virtue of your majesty's unintelligent reply, I may remark that men may laugh and cry, or may cry and laugh, about everything in this world, from their neighbours' deaths, which, as a general rule, in no wise concerns them, to their own latter ends, which do concern them exceedingly. For my part, I am in the habit of laughing at everything, because it animates the brain, stimulates the lungs, beautifies the countenance, and—for the moment, good-bye, Raja Vikram ! "

²¹ The river of Jaganath in Orissa ; it shares the honours of sanctity with some twenty-nine others, and in the lower regions it represents the classical Styx.

The warrior king, being forewarned this time, shifted the bundle containing the Baital from his back to under his arm, where he pressed it with all his might.

This proceeding, however, did not prevent the Vampire from slipping back to his tree, and leaving an empty cloth with the Raja.

Presently the demon was trussed up as usual ; a voice sounded behind Vikram, and the loquacious thing again began to talk.

THE FIRST STORY FROM THE DRAVIDIAN NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS (THE MADANAKAMARAJANKADAI)

LISTEN, oh you best of womankind ! There was a town named Dharmapuri. Over it ruled a king Dharmananda. He regarding the lives of his subjects as his own life, ruled them very justly with his fellow officers—the ministers, councillors, commanders, captains and lieutenants. During the fifty years of his prosperous reign there was not even a single day on which he swerved from the Codes of Manu. But for all his charitable disposition he had not the happiness of a son to his allotment. Of course, this defect worked much in his mind. He consecrated several shrines to Brahma, *Rudra*, *Vishnu* and other Gods, had their festivals regularly conducted, distributed food to the poor, made the sixteen kinds of donations¹ to deserving men, and sent up prayers to God on the three occasions of morning, noon and evening with the intention of securing a son. After all his devotions seemed to have effect, and God gave him a son. The king distributed sugar on account of that happy news, and brought him up very tenderly. In the third year after this event, the king had another son, who was also being carefully brought up.

A few days after, all on a sudden, an enemy invaded the town of Dharmapuri, and totally defeating him, drove him outside the town with his wife and children. The king was much vexed at the calamity that came over him, and cursing his own evil star, went to another town and was earning his livelihood by begging there in the streets till his elder son was seven years of age and his younger five. Thinking that it was a sin to ruin the boys without giving them their education, he took them to a distant village, where an old learned Brahman was keeping a

¹ Generally the donations only are enumerated. They are (1) *Godâna*, gift of cow ; (2) *Bhûmi-dâna*, gift of lands ; (3) *Tiladâna*, gift of Sesamum ; (4) *Svaradâna*, gift of gold ; (5) *Ghitadâna*, gift of gâlu ; (6) *Vastradâna*, gift of cloth ; (7) *Guladâna*, gift of molasses ; (8) *Dhanyadâna*, gift of paddy ; (9) *Rajatadâna*, gift of silver ; (10) *Lavanadâna*, gift of salt ; to Brahmans in each case.

school. He gave the sons over to the charge of that village schoolmaster, and addressed him as follows :—

“ These two are my sons ; I am extremely poor and so quite unable to pay anything for their education. But if you would kindly educate them, I mean rewarding your pains by presenting you with one of these boys.” The schoolmaster agreed to the conditions, and so the king and his queen, after leaving their children there, went away to some other town to pass their days like the lowest men in begging.

The Brahman teacher appointed the eldest son to the domestic task of grazing the cows and buffaloes, and educated with all possible means the second son, who duly learnt the four *Vēdas*,² six *Sāstras*, sixty-four varieties of philosophy, the Codes of Manu, and even the objectionable science of jugglery, the magic art of infusing ones own soul into different bodies and other tricks in which his master the old Brahman was a great expert. He also acquired from him the faculty of *Jñānadrishti*.³ Thus he passed several years in study and acquired perfection in one and all the deparments of knowledge.

One day, just when he had attained the mastery of the science of *Jñānadrishti*, he experimented it to see where his parents were dwelling then, and when he found out by his newly acquired power their whereabouts, he wanted to go and see them secretly. They have forgot us so long and are now mere beggars in the streets. I shall now go and see them and make arrangements to relieve them from their calamity. They may then ask me about my brother ; why should my master not educate him but appoint him to only low works. Let me now dive at his motives by my *Jñānadrishti*. Thus pondering over in his mind, he thought for a time and exclaimed, “ Vile wretch ! For henceforth I must only regard you so, as you want to deceive my parents when they come to demand one of us. You also mean to make me sit in the sun as a student that is very careless and never pays any attention whatever to his books ; of course, they will choose my elder brother, being deceived by his position of a monitor in the class, though he knows nothing. Thus you mean to deceive my poor parents. Oh ! I know how to deceive you.” These were the thoughts of the prince—the second son—

² The four *Vēdas* are (1) *Rig Vēda*, (2) *Jajur Vēda*, (3) *Sāma Vēda*, (4) *Athawa Vēda*—are the celebrated holy writings in the religion of the Hindūs. The first three only are the regular *vēdas*, and the last was afterwards added.

³ The knowing eye, a faculty of learning the inner feeling of others.

and they were quite natural. He saw only then the evil intentions of his teacher. He wanted to inform his parents of them and was waiting for the night to proceed to them.

The night came on. After his duties of the evening as a student were over, he retired for rest or rather pretended to retire for rest. For no sleep could now close down his eye-lids since the evil intentions of his master became plain to him. He therefore left his bed and walked out to the public road. To his joy he found there the dead body of a kite. He transferred himself into its corpse, flew at once to his parents and reached them in the dead of night. Then resuming his own shape he awakened them from their slumber. They were surprised at first, and when they were certain that it was one of their sons who stood before them, kissed their boy and inquired into the welfare of his brother and the way by which he managed to come such a long distance. Their second son related to them in haste everything ; how he acquired all the rare arts, how his elder brother had been ruined, how the master's intention stood, and how they must act themselves. He also requested them to come soon and reclaim him and not to take the elder brother who would be quite useless, then, for them. He assured them that he would afterwards himself manage for his rescue. Thus advising them, the second son flew back, assuming the shape of a kite, in the same night to his master's house, and resuming his former shape fell in sound slumber.

Soon as the morning dawned, the father-king and the mother-queen set out to the Brahman teacher's village, which they reached after several days' journey. They entered his house. The teacher welcomed them with a cheerful countenance and made arrangements for giving them a grand dinner. Secretly he called a student to his side and sent him to fetch the eldest son who was grazing the cattle. As soon as the boy arrived, he dressed him up with all pomp and sent him to the school as the monitor of the highest class. And he made the second son to sit in the scorching sun, as a fit punishment, as he said, for his not studying his lessons well. The parents saw what was before them, and concluded with themselves of the extreme truthfulness in the second son's statement.

The feasts were over. The master was over-hospitable to his poor but royal guests. He extolled the high proficiencies of the eldest son, and of his having raised himself by his own exertions to a monitor's position in the highest class of the

school ; and he also spoke very poorly of the attainments of the second son, who spent the greater portion of the day in sitting in the sun for his carelessness and stupidity.

The king saw too well the tricks of the master ; therefore he spoke to the Brahman thus : "Sir, many thanks for your having devoted so much of attention to my first son. Him I give to you only, as I think, he may not in the pride of his overlearning obey me. Stupid as he is, I prefer the second son, as I can make him obey me." Thus taking the second son, the king returned with him to his place. The master was sorely disappointed at his own ruin, and sent the eldest son as usual to look after his cattle.

The old king and queen retired to a certain town with their second son, who now asked for some food. They said that he must fast that night with them, and as soon as morning dawned they shall beg in the streets and give him his breakfast. The son was extremely vexed at the imprudence of his parents, who had never saved anything during all their past period of begging. So he spoke to them thus : "My dear father, I am very sorry to see that you have been begging so long without having saved even a single pie for the future. Let what is past be past and let us no more think of it. For the present kindly do as I request you. The king of this town has a big cock for which all along his life he had been searching a hen. He has not even now succeeded in procuring one for it. I shall transform myself, by the power of the magic art that I have recently learnt, into a hen. When I begin to crow in the morning the people would be attracted towards me by my voice, and report to the king of the existence of a suitable match for his cock. He shall then demand me of you in sale. If you ask one hundred pagodas he shall offer them and take me disguised as a hen from you. I shall then rejoin you." So advising his father, he assumed the shape of a hen and began to crow. Early morning crowds began to collect before the abode of the beggar king. The news reached the ears of the king of that town, who at once came to the spot to see, in person, the hen reported to be a fair match to his cock ; for his mania for these fowls had always been very great. The father and now the owner of the hen demanded one hundred pagodas for it, which the king of the town offered without grudging, and walked home fully rejoiced to have secured such a good fowl. He gave her over to the fowlers, who preserved her in an iron basket which they set over her and

placed a weight over the basket. No sooner these persons left the hen to herself, then she—rather the prince in disguise—assumed the shape of a bandicoote, and boring a hole underground escaped from his confinement, and, crossing all the palace mansions, reached the outside of the town and went to the place where his father was staying. The parents had kept meals ready and were waiting for their son. So they were highly pleased to see him return safe, and first serving him meals, sat down themselves for their dinner after him.

The king of that country who was always thinking of his highly bought hen, soon as he had some leisure, ordered the fowlers to bring her to him; and when they went for her they found in that place a hole. Their confusion may be more imagined than described. So flying back in anguish they reported the strange phenomena of a hole in the place of a hen that they safely secured in an iron basket over which they had put a heavy weight.

The king was extremely vexed at the mystery of the disappearance of his hen. "Can a bandicoote ever kill a hen and eat her up. May kill perhaps! Let us now examine the hole and its winding, and dragging it out kill it." So thinking he ordered his men to bring him at least the murderer of his hen—the bandicoote. Pickaxes, spades, hoes and crowbars were freely administered to all windings of the hole of the bandicoote till more than half the palace was ploughed down. All the search, of course, proved vain, and the king doubly mortified, sanctioned at once new estimates for the repair of his mansion.

Let us turn to the prince. He lived in peace outside the town with his parents, who took great care of him till every pie of the hundred pagodas was spent. When that sum was exhausted they informed their son of it, who now devising within himself of another scheme, spoke thus to his father: "There lives a rich merchant named Dhanapâla Setti in this town. He has an only son who prefers walking only instead of riding, which his father daily compels him to do. I shall assume the shape of a *Pañchalakyani* horse.⁴ You shall walk with me to the tank side where the merchant's son will come in the morning for his bath. He shall have a liking for the horse and ask of you the price. You had better demand one thousand pagodas. He will conduct you to his father, count you out the money, and take me to the stables. I shall somehow manage to come

⁴ A horse whose four feet and forehead are white.

away from my confinement." Thus instructing, the son assumed the shape of a horse and stood before his father neighing most melodiously. The father was extremely delighted at the beauty of the horse, which was no other except his own son, and as instructed took him to the tank side. The merchant's son came, and as prophesied already, promised to offer pagodas one thousand for it. So he took the seller with his horse to Dhanapāla Setti his father.

Now, it unfortunately happened, that the Brahman master who instructed the transferred prince, was sitting by the side of the merchant. He, as soon as he saw the horse, fully concluded within himself that it was no other than the trickish disciple of his who had overpowered him by his own art. And he now devised plans to kill him by some tricks, and with this evil desire spoke to the merchant: "My dear merchant, you have an only son. And this horse is a very rough and mischievous animal, not fit to be used by such untrained riders like him. So it is not fit for him. And if you or he persist in buying the horse, you shall never see the face of him getting down from it. Therefore, as I know riding better, I wish to have it; give me please a loan of one thousand pagodas. I shall return you the money as soon as I go home. You shall now see yourself the tricks of this animal." So saying the Brahman master procured one thousand pagodas from the merchant, and counting them out to the seller, secured the horse, nay, his student whom he had all along, ever since his father walked away with him, been hating.

The master got upon the horse and began to whip it right and left. It took him to all the places he drove till it was entirely exhausted. Now the rider took it to a dirty pool to water it and thus to kill it. The transformed prince saw the evil intentions of his master-enemy, and so entered the body of a dead fish inside the water leaving that of a horse. The life now left the horse and hence it fell down. The Brahman now saw by his *Jñānadrishṭi* that his student had transformed himself into a fish, and so calling all his school-boys ordered them to pour out the water in the tank and kill all the fish in it. And they were executing their master's order. The prince in the shape of the fish was greatly confused. He saw on that tank bank the dead body of a buffalo which the cobblers had left there and went to fetch their weapons to dissect it. The prince entered its body and began to run away. The master was

watching all the prince's movements, and so following the buffalo ordered the cobbler to torture it. The prince in confusion assumed the shape of a parrot, the carcass of which he discovered in a tree. And the master taking the shape of a kite (*garuda*) followed him furiously through mountains, forests, thickets and jungles, till at last both of them reached a town. The prince finding it impossible to escape the beak of the kite flew in the direction of the palace. To his joy the windows of the room of the princess of that town were open, and she herself was sitting in her cushion undoing the knots of the hair over her head. The parrot-prince flew through the windows and fell on her lap. She was extremely delighted at the sight of the parrot, and taking it up on her hands kissed it close to her breast. She immediately sent for a goldsmith, and measuring out rubies from her treasury asked him to make a suitable cage for her parrot. And the goldsmith did accordingly. The kite waited for some time outside the window, and vowing by signs to take away the parrot's life in a week flew away. The prince-parrot pooh-poohed the idea by signs and felt himself perfectly secure in the cage. The princess dandled her pet during the whole day, and at night fed it with milk, fruits and condiments and retired for her usual sleep.

At about midnight the parrot left its cage, and assuming its own form of a prince sat beside the sleeping princess, smeared sandal over her body, ate all the sweetmeats that she had left on her table, and converting himself again into a parrot, was quietly dozing away the night in its cage. At about the tenth *ghatikā*⁵ in the night, the princess arose from her deep slumber. It was then that she came to know of something that had been put upon her while in sleep without her knowledge. The sandal cup was empty ; the scent boxes had exhausted their contents ; all her body was rubbed over with sweet scent ; " Who could have done it in this strictly guarded place ? The *Zandna* is most jealously watched by soldiers and eunuchs. Who could have managed to throw dust into the eyes of one and all the watches ? Why should that expert man who had managed to cross all the so many barriers not awake me ; let me watch next night." So thought the princess, and with that thought morning dawned. During the day she nursed the parrot as usual ; when it became dark she retired for rest and kept herself

⁵ *Ghatikā* is equal to twenty-four minutes. It is a Hindu method of reckoning time.

awake till about midnight, and afterwards unconsciously fell in deep slumber. The prince-parrot, watching the carefulness of the princess, never left its cage till she was snoring. Then it came out, and resuming its original shape applied sandal to the sleeping princess's body and went into the cage. She, on leaving her bed next morning, saw in her body the signs of the shameful act repeated, and much astonished at her own carelessness and at the dexterity of the secret frequenter of her room, and fully determining within herself to catch out the thief the next night, took little breakfast and slept the whole day to be cautious during the night. For all that, the parrot did not lose its care ; for before going to bed, she fed him well, and on rising from her sleep in the evening, she nourished him with milk and fruits. After a light supper, to keep herself awake, she retired to her bed, and, covering her body with a blanket from head to foot, pretended to sleep. The parrot-prince watched all her movements. He knew quite well that she was wide awake. But he thought it best to come out of the cage and disclose his history to her. He was also eager to instruct her as to her future course. So, he came out of the cage, resuming his original form, and chewing betel sat beside the princess in her couch. She now caught hold of his arm and sitting up in her bed spoke thus : " I have watched you leaving your parrot's body and resuming this princely shape. Tell me now who you are, why you have assumed this shape, and what made you come to me." The prince then related his parentage, education and adventures, how his elder brother had been ruined, how he first transformed himself into a hen, then a horse, then a fish, then a buffalo, and at last into a parrot, and how his bitter enemy the teacher pursued him throughout his transformations and teased him. He then addressed the princess as follows : " I prophesied with myself that you must become my wife, and hence resulted my secret visits to your bed. Even now, knowing that you were wideawake, I came to you as I wished to instruct you previously about the course of action you ought to follow. My master, who hates me from the very bottom of his heart, has vowed to kill me in eight days. Three days are already over. In five days more he will come to your father—the king of this country, with a band of rope-dancers. He will perform before him so excellently that your father shall make up his mind to give him whatever he demands. The master, as he comes with the sole view of killing me, will demand the parrot. The maid-

servants will come to you from your father and request you to give them the bird. You had better first refuse. Then they will again come for it. You shall then break the neck of the parrot and give it into their hands. Be not afraid of having killed me, for I shall then run over to your pearl necklace. The servants shall again come to you saying that your father wanted the necklace. Then, you had better break the necklace in pieces and cast away the pearls in the courtyard. Then, there shall take place a wonder which you can very well see from this topmost mansion." Thus ended the prince. The princess was extremely delighted at the harangue of her lover. For henceforth, so he must be called. The princess was enslaved by all his qualities, personal as well as mental, and sent up prayers to God for his having given her such a noble and clever husband. All the prince was relating seemed more a fairy tale to her. She was greatly amazed at all his wonderful attainments, and was glad after all that the intruder was none but himself. With an elated mind she slept soundly by the side of the prince that night, and soon as it was morning requested him to assume the shape of a parrot. Thus passed five days. The prince continued as a parrot during all the day time and resumed his own shape during the nights.

Just as the prince prophesied, a band of rope-dancers arrived at the palace portals on the morning of the sixth day. The king himself was given up for such sports. He therefore invited them and ordered them to give a performance in the palace. The master and his band of dancers did their tricks so very well, that the king was highly delighted at their execution. He told them to demand what presents they wanted after first rewarding them with clothes and money. The chief dancer—the Brahman master in disguise—demanded the princess's parrot; unless it came to his hands, he said, he will not get down from the rope-swing. The king sent certain maid-servants to bring the parrot. They returned with a negative reply. But the rope-dancer persisting in the request, the king ordered his daughter to give up the parrot; and when the servants went in with the order, she writhed her parrot's neck and threw the pieces into their hands. They placed the bits before the king, who, though vexed at his daughter's disobedience, did not carry the matter further.

But the rope-dancer would not come down. He now asked the king to give his daughter's necklace. The king sent for it,

and the princess, enraged at the pliancy of her father to the words of a rope-dancer, tore her necklace and threw the pearls into the courtyard. She was unusually astonished at the events which literally followed the prince's narrations and was watching what more would take place. As soon as the pearls fell down on the courtyard, they were all converted into worms. The master saw by his *Jñānadrishi* that the prince was in one of the worms. So he remained in the rope as a man and assumed a second shape as a cock. He, now in his latter shape, began to peck at every worm. The prince, who was better up in these tricks than the master who taught him, now assumed the shape of a cat, and pouncing upon the cock caught it by its neck.

The spectators were startled at what they saw before them. The cock in human voice demanded help. The cat in still younger human voice cried out that he *must* kill his enemy. The king and the other spectators interfered and wanted to know who they were, why they fought so in beastly shape and what was the cause of their enmity. The prince now related everything of his master and himself. The master acknowledged before the assembly his evil intentions. He also swore before them all, that he gave up all such intentions from that day as he found his student a better expert than himself. They both resumed their original shapes.

The king was highly pleased at the beauty of the prince. He also respected the teacher. Calling the prince to his side he spoke to him thus: "You have remained with my daughter, though it be in the shape of a parrot for one week. So, you must ever remain with her, that is, marry her." True to the sayings that the happy events must be instantly celebrated, the king celebrated the marriage that very day. The master, too, overcome by the superiority of the prince, was perfectly reconciled to him. He gave the prince his brother also, whom he ever sent after his cows. The prince reclaiming his elder brother and also receiving all sorts of presents from his father-in-law went to his original country prepared for a battle in the act of conquering it; his parents also followed him.

The usurper of Dhamāpuri was taken unawares. He thought it best to surrender his kingdom without a battle, and did accordingly. Thus the second son, without a blow, got back his lost country Dhamāpuri. He then educated his elder brother also and had him married to a princess. He ruled over

that country for several years, conferring peace and prosperity over the inhabitants.

Thus Buddhichāturya finished his story. Before concluding he added one sentence. "Must it not be such a prince that ought to become your husband ? Oh, my love ! " By that time the day dawned and the minister's son and the princess left their bed-chamber.

THE FARMER, HIS WIFE, AND THE OPEN DOOR

ONCE upon a time a poor farmer and his wife, having finished their day's labour and eaten their frugal supper, were sitting by the fire, when a dispute arose between them as to who should shut the door, which had been blown open by a gust of wind. "Wife, shut the door!" said the man. "Husband, shut it yourself!" said the woman. "I will not shut it, and you shall not shut it," said the husband; "but let the one who speaks the first word shut it." This proposal pleased the wife exceedingly, and so the old couple, well satisfied, retired in silence to bed.

In the middle of the night they heard a noise, and, peering out, they perceived that a wild dog had entered the room, and that he was busy devouring their little store of food. Not a word, however, would either of these silly people utter, and the dog, having sniffed at everything, and having eaten as much as he wanted, went out of the house.

The next morning the woman took some grain to the house of a neighbour in order to have it ground into flour. In her absence the barber entered and said to the husband: "How is it you are sitting here all alone?" The farmer answered never a word. The barber then shaved his head, but still he did not speak; and then he shaved off half his beard and half his moustache, but even then the man refrained from uttering a syllable. Then the barber covered him all over with a hideous coating of lamp-black, but the solid farmer remained as dumb as a mute. "The man is bewitched!" cried the barber, and he hastily quitted the house.

He had hardly gone when the wife returned from the mill. She, seeing her husband in such a ghastly plight, began to tremble, and exclaimed: "Ah! wretch, what have you been doing?" "You spoke the first word," said the farmer, "so begone, woman, and shut the door."

STORY OF THE WONDERFUL MANGO-FRUIT

ON the banks of the Kávéri there was a city called Tiruvidaimarudur, where ruled a king named Chakraditya. In that city there lived a poor Brahman and his wife, who, having no children, brought up in their house a young parrot as tenderly as if it had been their own offspring. One day the parrot was sitting on the roof of the house, basking itself in the morning sun, when a large flock of parrots flew past, talking to each other about certain mango-fruits. The Brahman's parrot asked them what were the peculiar properties of those fruits and was informed that beyond the seven oceans there was a great mango-tree, the fruit of which gave perpetual youth to the person who ate of it, however old and infirm he might be. On hearing of this wonder the Brahman's parrot requested permission to accompany them, which being granted, they all continued their flight. When at length they arrived at the mango-tree, all ate of its fruit; but the Brahman's parrot reflected :

“ It would not be right for me to eat this fruit; I am young, while my adopted parents, the poor Brahman and his wife, are very old. So I shall give them this fruit, and they will become young and blooming by eating it.”

And that same evening the good parrot brought the fruit to the Brahman, and explained to him its extraordinary properties. But the Brahman thought within himself :

“ I am a beggar. What matters it if I become young and live for ever, or else die this very moment? Our king is very good and charitable. If such a great man should eat of this fruit and renew his youth, he would confer the greatest benefit on mankind. Therefore I will give this mango to our good king.”

In pursuance of this self-denying resolution, the poor Brahman proceeded to the palace and presented the fruit to the king, at the same time relating how he had obtained it and its qualities. The king richly rewarded the Brahman for his gift, and sent him away. Then he began to reflect thus :

"Here is a fruit which can bestow perpetual youth on the person who eats it. I should gain this great boon for myself alone, and what happiness could I expect under such circumstances unless shared by my friends and subjects? I shall therefore not eat this mango-fruit, but plant it carefully in my garden, and it will in time become a tree, which will bear much fruit having the same wonderful virtue, and my subjects shall, every one, eat of the fruit, and, with myself, be endowed with everlasting youth."

So, calling his gardener, the king gave him the fruit, and he planted it in the royal presence. In due course of time the fruit grew into a fine tree, and during the spring season it began to bud and blossom and bear fruit. The king, having fixed upon an auspicious day for cutting one of the mango-fruits, gave it to his domestic chaplain, who was ninety years old, in order that his youth should be renewed. But no sooner had the priest tasted it than he fell down dead. At this unexpected calamity the king was both astonished and deeply grieved. When the old priest's wife heard of her husband's sudden death she came and prayed the king to allow her to perform *sati* with him on the same funeral pyre, which increased the king's sorrow; but he gave her the desired permission, and himself superintended all the ceremonies of the cremation. King Chakraditya then sent for the poor Brahman, and demanded of him how he had dared to present a poisonous fruit to his king. The Brahman replied:

"My lord, I brought up a young parrot in my house, in order to console me for having no son. That parrot brought me the fruit one day, and told me of its wonderful properties. Believing that the parrot spoke the truth, I presented it to your Majesty, never for a moment suspecting it to be poisonous."

The king listened to the poor Brahman's words, but thought that the poor priest's death should be avenged. So he consulted his ministers who recommended, as a slight punishment, that the Brahman should be deprived of his left eye. This was done accordingly, and on his return home, when his wife saw his condition, she asked the reason of such mutilation.

"My dear," said he, "the parrot we have fostered so tenderly is the cause of this."

And they resolved to break the neck of the treacherous bird. But the parrot, having overheard their conversation, thus addressed them:

" My kind foster parents, everyone must be rewarded for the good actions or punished for the evil deeds of his previous life. I brought you the fruit with a good intention, but my sins in my former life have given it a different effect. Therefore I pray you to kill me and bury me with a little milk in a pit. And, after my funeral ceremony is over, I request you to undertake a pilgrimage to Banaras to expiate your own sins."

So the old Brahman and his wife killed their pet parrot and buried it as directed, after which, overcome with grief, they set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy City.

Meanwhile the king commanded his gardener to set guards over the poison-tree, and to allow no one to eat of its fruit ; and all the inhabitants soon came to know that the king had a mango-tree in his garden, the fruit of which was deadly poison. Now, there was in the city an old washerwoman, who had frequent quarrels with her daughter-in-law, and one day, being weary of life, she left the house, threatening to eat of the poison-tree and die.

The young parrot who was killed for having brought the poisonous mango-fruit was re-born as a green parrot, and was waiting for an opportunity to demonstrate the harmless nature of the tree ; and when he saw the old woman approach with a determination to put an end to her life by eating of its fruit, he plucked one with his beak and dropped it down before her. The old woman rejoiced that fate sanctioned her death, and greedily ate the fruit, when lo ! instead of dying she became young and blooming again. Those who had seen her leave the house a woman over sixty years of age were astonished on seeing her return as a handsome girl of sixteen and learning that the wonderful transformation was caused by the supposed poisonous mango-tree.

The strange news soon reached the king, who, in order to test the tree still further, ordered another fruit of it to be brought and gave it to a goldsmith of more than ninety years of age, who had embezzled some gold which had been entrusted to him to make into ornaments for the ladies of the palace, and was on that account undergoing imprisonment. When he had eaten the fruit, he, in his turn, became a young man of sixteen. The king was now convinced that the fruit of the mango-tree, so far from being poisonous, had the power of converting decrepit age into lusty and perennial youth. But how had the old priest died by eating it ?

It was by a mere accident. One day a huge serpent was sleeping on a branch of the mango-tree, and its head hung over one of the fruit; poison dropped from its mouth and fell on the rind of that fruit; the gardener, who had no knowledge of this, when asked to bring a fruit for the priest, happened to bring the one on which the poison had fallen, and the priest, having eaten it, died.

And now the king caused proclamation to be made throughout his kingdom that all who pleased might come and partake of the mango-fruit, and everyone ate of it and became young. But king Chakraditya's heart burnt within him at the remembrance of his ill-treatment of the poor Brahman, who had returned with his wife from Banaras. So he sent for him, explained his mistake, and gave him a fruit to eat, which, having tasted, the aged Brahman became young and his eye was also restored to him. But the greatest loss of all, that of the parrot who brought the fruit from beyond the seven oceans, remained irreparable.

"Thus, my lord," continued the old minister Manuniti, "it behoves us not to act precipitately in this affair of Bodhaditya, which we must carefully sift before expressing our opinion as to the punishment he may deserve at your majesty's hands."

A BEAR MARRIES A GIRL

Two women, a mother and her little daughter, were one night watching their field of Indian corn (*makkay*) against the inroads of animals. The mother had to go to her house to prepare the food, and ordered her daughter to light a fire outside. Whilst she was doing this a bear came and took her away. He carried her into his den, and daily brought her food and drink. He rolled a big stone away in front of the den whenever he went on his travels, which the girl was not strong enough to remove. When she became old enough to do this he used daily to lick her feet, by which they became swollen and eventually dwindled down to mere misshapen stumps. The girl who had become of age, had to endure the caresses of her guardian by whom she eventually became *enceinte*. She died in child-birth, and the poor bear, after vain efforts to restore her to life, roamed disconsolately about the fields.

THE HUNGRY STONES

I WAS on my way back to Calcutta with a friend after having concluded my tour during the Puja recess. It was then that we met him in a railway train. His dress had misled us into thinking that he was a Mahomedan hailing from North-Western India. His conversation puzzled us still more. He had such a way of talking about all mundane topics, as if the Lord of the Universe never undertook to do anything without first consulting him about it. We had imagined ourselves to have been in perfect security before being apprised of the very amazing and unheard-of events happening secretly in the world, or being told that the Russians had advanced thus far and the English had such hidden motives, or that a great hodge-podge of confusion had been broiling among the native princes. Our new acquaintance smiled a little and said, "There happens more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are reported in your newspapers!" We had but just come out to the world, so we were struck dumb at this person's manner and bearing. On the slightest plea he would bring in science, or explain the Vedas, or recite Persian poesy, all in a trice. As we had no pretensions whatever to science, the Vedas or the Persian, our veneration for him began to increase immensely, so much so that my Theosophist friend began to believe firmly that our companion was somehow connected with something supernatural, might be some strange magnetism, occult power, or some ethereal body, or something of that kind. Even the most commonplace remarks by this uncommon personage my friend had been listening to with absorbed reverence, and taking notes of them in secret. The uncommon personage seemed also to have noticed this and was gratified to some extent.

When our train stopped at the junction, we gathered together in the waiting-room and waited for another train to come up. The night had then advanced to half-past ten. We understood there was some accident on the road, and the next train was to arrive very late. I resolved to spread my bedding upon the

table and have a little sleep in the meantime ; just then the uncommon personage told the following story. There was no sleeping that night !

Owing to some differences in respect of a few administrative measures I gave up my Junagadh post and entered the service of the Nizam of Hyderabad. As I was found to be young and sturdy I was at once employed in collecting tolls on cotton at Barich.

It was a very lovely place this Barich. Through large woodlands below the lovely hills the Sustha river—a corruption of the Sanskrit name *Sachhatoya*, transparent water—wound on, and taking swift serpentine turns like a skilled danseuse at every step and murmuring along her rocky pathway. All alone by the side of the stream, and high above the landing-stage with one hundred and fifty stony stairs, stood a stately palace of white marble at the foot of the hill. There was no human habitation near ; the cotton mart of Barich and the village were all very far off.

It is nearly two and a half centuries now that Shah Mahamed II had the palace built in this lonely nook for indulging in his amours. From the mouth of the fountain set in its bath jets of rose-scented water used then to spurt upwards, and in this sequestered room cooled by the perfumed spray, youthful Persian girls would rest upon the cold rocky seats decked with fine marble, and setting their tresses loose for ablution they would stretch their soft uncovered blossom-like feet in the limpid water of the reservoir, and with *sitars* upon their knees sing the *gazal* songs of the vineyards.

That same fountain plays no longer ; those songs are sung no more, nor sweet strokes of lovely white feet fall upon the white marble any further. It is now the very large and the very dreary abode of companionless toll-collectors, like us sick of living all alone. The old office clerk, Karim Khan, however, repeatedly forbade me to live here. He said I might stay in the daytime if I liked, but should on no account spend the night here. I laughed at him. The servants said they would work here till evening but would not stay at nightfall. I offered to let them have their way. This house had such a bad reputation—even thieves would not dare pay it a visit at night.

The first few days I came here the loneliness of this abandoned stone palace seemed to press heavily upon my breast.

I kept away as far as I could, and engaged myself incessantly in work, and on my return at night cast my wearied limbs to sleep.

Before a week, however, was over, some strange fascination of the house seemed gradually to gain upon me. The condition in which I had been at the time would baffle description, and it would also be rather hard to make people believe me. The whole house like some living organism seemed to digest me little by little by some infatuating secretion in its womb.

This process was perhaps initiated as soon as I had stepped into this house, but I distinctly remember the occurrences of the day I first consciously felt its inception.

It being the beginning of the hot season the market was then slack, and I had little work to do. I was resting in an armchair at the lowest step of the landing-stage shortly before sunset. The Sustha had then grown slender, a large expanse of sand near the bank opposite had been tinted with the glamour of the afternoon brightness, and the pebbles under the clear shallow water on this side had been glistening brightly. There was no wind then, and a dense sweet aroma of mint, anise and wild basil from the neighbouring hill had laden the still atmosphere heavily.

Just as the sun went down behind the hilltops, a tall shadow descended upon the day's stage. The hills being far off, the juncture of light and darkness does not here last very long after sunset. I was just thinking of starting for a ride around when I heard footsteps upon the stairs. I turned about and looked—there was nobody.

As soon as I turned back and resumed my seat, considering it a mere delusion of the senses, a number of simultaneous foot-falls were heard, as if a number of persons were coming down the stairs running. A strange feeling of pleasure tinged with slight fear filled my whole frame. Though there was no figure in front of me, still I seemed to feel a distinct presence, as if a bevy of beauties frolicsome in their gaiety had descended into the waters of the Sustha for a bath this hot afternoon. Although that evening there was no audible sound whatever at the silent foot of the hill, or on the bank of the river, or even in the lonely mansion, I felt I heard distinctly like a hundred trickles from a murmuring spring the sportive silvery laughter of the bathers as they passed by my side and followed one another swiftly. They did not seem to mark me—as if I was as much invisible to them as they were to me. The river

was as placid as before, but it seemed certain that the shallow waters of the transparent stream became ruffled with the strokes of a number of arms decked with clinking armlets, that they were mirthfully splashing water at each other, and that the spray caused by the strokes of the swimmers' legs flew into the air like handfuls of pearls.

I felt a tremor in my breast, whether it was due to fear, pleasure or curiosity I could not quite make out. I felt an ardent desire to have a clear vision of it all, but there was nothing to be seen. It seemed, by lending an attentive ear, all their conversation could be distinctly heard, but it was only the chirps of the forest crickets that rewarded the absorbed hearing. It seemed as if the dark veil of two centuries and a half lay hanging just in front. I felt a trembling desire to lift a corner and look in; it was a large concourse that had gathered there, but the dark gloom hid everything from view.

The sultry stillness was suddenly broken by a rustling gust of wind, the calm surface of the Sustha became curly like the flowing tresses of a celestial beauty, and the whole woodland enveloped by the evening shade seemed to awake all at once with a rustle as if from an evil dream. Whether it was real or a dream, the invisible mirage that was reflected before my eyes from the vast expanse of the past two and a half centuries flitted away in a moment. Those illusionary beings that plunged into the waters of the Sustha pacing over me in their fleet bodiless legs and laughing aloud in their voiceless laughter, did not return by my side wringing out water from the wet fringes of their apparel. Like a perfume spirited away by the wind, they had also flown away in a breath of the spring.

I then became apprehensive that the Muse of poesy, finding the solitude agreeable, had probably settled herself upon my shoulders. The mischievous goddess had perhaps come this time to put me off my head, poor thing that I was, earning my living by collecting tolls with the sweat of my brow! I thought it would be better to regale myself with a good meal—it was an empty stomach that harboured all incurable maladies. I called my cook and ordered him to prepare a regular well-spiced and very rich Moghul dish for my dinner.

The following morning the whole thing appeared extremely ridiculous. In a well-pleased temper I put on a sola hat like a European, drove my trap noisily and at a rapid pace, and went after my inquiries. As it was the day for drafting the quarterly

report I was to have come home rather late. But no sooner was it evening than I felt being drawn homeward. Who attracted me I could not say, but I seemed to feel I should delay no longer, as if they had all been waiting. I left the report incomplete, and with the sola hat on and the rolling wheels of my trap waking up the lonesome densely shaded pathway dyed with the evening grey, I alighted at last at the dark silent stately mansion lying off the cliffs.

The front room just above the stairs was very large. The extensive room rested over skilfully carved arches supported by three rows of massive pillars. This magnificent apartment would day and night resound in its vast emptiness. It was dusk and the lamp had not yet been lighted. As soon as I pushed the door open and entered the large room, a great tumult seemed at once to be set afoot inside, as if the assembly was suddenly broken up and all dispersed every way through the doors and windows and the openings and the verandahs. But who fled and which way there was no knowing. Seeing nothing anywhere I stood speechless. Some kind of an all-absorbing sensation sent a rapturous thrill through my body. It seemed as if the odour of the remnants of long-spent hair compounds and the mild perfume of attar entered my nostrils. As I stood amidst those ancient stone pillars in that large, unpeopled, unlighted apartment I seemed to hear the water of the fountain fall noisily upon the white marble. What tune it was that was being played upon the *sitar* I could not make out; the clinking of golden ornaments here, the tinkling of anklets there, and the occasional peal of large copper bells striking the hours, struck the ears. The sweet discourses of the far-off *nahabat* music, the tinkles of the crystal pendants of the chandelier swinging in the wind, the song of the *bulbul* from its cage on the verandah, the call of the tame swan from the garden, the whole seemed to raise up an unearthly music all round me.

So great a delusion got hold of me that it seemed as if this unreal occurrence that was impalpable and incomprehensible was the only thing that was real on earth, and the rest was all alike an illusive mirage. That I was myself—in other words that I was So-and-So, the eldest son of my deceased father, that I earn four hundred rupees a month by collecting tolls on cotton, that I wear a sola hat and a short coat and drive to the office in a swift trap—all seemed so very ridiculous

and baseless unrealities, that even as I stood in the middle of that room enveloped by the vast silent darkness I gave vent to a loud ha ! ha ! ha !

My Mahomedan servant entered the room just then with a lighted lamp in his hand. I do not know if he fancied my mind had been unhinged, but I at once came to remember that I was So-and-So, the eldest son of So-and-So who had passed away to heaven. I also thought that it was for our great poets and poetesses to say whether any shapeless fountain had been spouting anywhere through eternal time or invisible fingers had been striking up endless tunes in any *sitar* of fancy. But I felt this much to be certain, that I had been making four hundred and fifty a month by collecting tolls in the Barich market. The strange delusions of the preceding moments then struck my delusion again, and proceeding to the kerosine-lighted camp table with a newspaper I abandoned myself to an amused laugh.

After reading the paper and helping myself to the Moghul dish, I put out the light and took to bed in a small room in the corner. Through the open window in front, high above the dark forest-girt Aurali hills, a brilliant star had been looking down intently from thousands of millions of miles beyond the azure above, upon the toll collector stretched upon that very insignificant camp bed. While contemplating thus, astonished and amused, I dropped into sleep. I cannot say when, nor how long I slept. All of a sudden I woke up with a tremor, not that there was any sound, nor could I see that anyone had entered the room. The star with its fixed gaze had gone down the dark cliffs, and the slender moonlight of the waning quarter had come in through the window with meekness, as it were, resulting from conscious intrusion.

Though I saw no one, still I felt distinctly that someone had been gently pushing me. Just as I woke that person seemed to beckon to me with five jewelled fingers and direct me to follow cautiously.

Very stealthily I rose. And though there was none other living being but myself in that hundred-chambered mansion of grand emptiness and of sleeping sound and waking echoes, still I feared at every step that somebody might wake up. Most of the apartments of the house usually remained closed and I had never entered them.

I have no clear recollection now as to where I had been

going on that night with silent steps and in abated breath, following the invisible summoner who called me. What a number of dark, narrow passages, long open porticoes, silent, sombre, wide council-rooms and small, close, secret chambers I passed there was no knowing.

Though I could not see the invisible messenger with my eyes, her shape was not unknown to my mind. An Arab she was, her hard, well-rounded arms looking as if made of white marble were visible through her ample hanging sleeves. From a corner of her cap a covering of a flimsy fabric had fallen upon her face, and a curved knife was tied at her waist.

It seemed a night out of the thousand and one of the Arabian tales had flown in here from the storyland, as if I had been wending along the narrow alleys of Baghdad immersed in sleep with all lights out, for the purpose of keeping a perilous assignation in that darksome night.

At last the messenger made a sudden halt in front of a dark blue screen and pointed downwards with her fingers. There was nothing below, but my heart's blood stood still in fear. I felt that a fierce African eunuch dressed in kincob had been squatting on the floor in front of the screen with his legs outstretched and a bare blade scimitar upon his lap, and swaying his body to and fro. My envoy lightly crossed over his legs and raised a corner of the screen.

A portion of the room inside was seen covered with a Persian carpet. Who sat upon the divan could not be perceived, but only a couple of lovely little feet in jewelled slippers beneath the fold of ample saffron pyjamas, and were resting idly upon a rosy velvet foot-stool. On one side of the table lay a bluish crystal plate with a few apples, *nashpatis*, *narangis*, and plenty of grape bunches, and by its side stood a couple of small cups and a glass flask containing some wine of a golden hue waiting as if it were for some expected guest. The strong perfume of a strange intoxicating incense came out of the room and stupefied me.

Just as with trembling bosom I attempted to pass over the outstretched legs of the eunuch, he woke up with a start, the scimitar fell from his lap upon the stony floor with a din.

Startled on hearing a terrible scream I looked up and saw that I was sitting in a sweat upon that old camp bed of mine. The light of dawn made the waning crescent moon look pallid like a wan sleepless patient, and our madcap Meher Ali had

been shouting "Keep away," "Keep away," as he proceeded in accordance with his daily routine along the solitary road in the early moon.

It was thus that one single night of my Arabian tales came to an end, but there was still a thousand more in store.

My days and nights came to be in great conflict with each other. To work I would go in the daytime tired and exhausted, and would curse that delusive witch, the night of empty dreams. At nightfall again my work-inclosed existence of the daytime would seem supremely worthless, unreal and ludicrous.

In the evening I would get entangled in the meshes of an intoxicated torpor. I would find myself transformed into a strange character of an unwritten history of hundreds of years ago. The Western short coat and tight pantaloons would then fit me no longer. I would then dress myself with great care, place a red velvet *fez* over my head, and wear loose pyjamas and flowered *ka'ba'* and tall silken *choga*, and have my coloured handkerchief sprinkled over with attar. I would throw away my cigarette and take recourse to a large *albola* with numerous coils and filled with rose water, and sit myself upon a large high-cushioned chair, as if I had been fully ready and waiting in eager expectation for a strange meeting with some loving sweetheart.

I cannot describe what wonders would next follow as the darkness of the night grew denser. It seemed as if some snatches of a marvellous story flew about in the variegated apartments of this mighty structure in a sudden gust of the spring. Certain portions could be gathered, but after that, the end was not to be perceived. And I would roam about through the rooms all night following in the trail of the flying fragments.

In this whirl of broken dreams, amidst this occasional flitting scent of *hena* and the music of the *sitar*, and from out of the waving air saturated with the perfume of cool fragrant spray, would suddenly gleam out a beauteous damsel like a transitory flash of lightning. Hers were the saffron pyjamas and the pair of laced slippers with turned up tips embracing her with soft white rosy feet; a jewelled flower *kanchuli* confined her heaving breasts, and golden trappings from a cap of red over her head hung round her white forehead and fell upon her cheeks.

She had turned me mad. Every night in quest of her I wandered in the deepest regions of sleep, and in every nook

and every lane along the complicated pathways of the dream-land of delusion.

On some evenings, while dressing with considerable care like a Shahzada, with lighted lamps placed on either side of the large mirror, by the side of my reflected image suddenly would fall the transitory shadow of the young Iranian. Turning her neck about in a twinkle, flinging an agitated and profoundly moving eager glance of intense pathos from her large full-black pupils, evincing just a tinge of unuttered language upon her beautiful moist ruby lips, swiftly tilting upwards her supple youthful frame, so like flowering creeper in a light, graceful dance, she would in a moment melt away in the mirror after showering luminous shoots from her bright jewellery and strewing the sparks of her pathos and longing and flurry, and her glance and smile about. A puff of irrepressible wind redolent with all the perfume carried off from the hill-forests would suddenly blow out both my lights, and I would give up dressing, and with eyes closed in an exhilaration of pleasure, stretch myself upon the bed at the end of my dressing-room. In all the wind and mixed perfume of the Aurali forests around me, much endearment and kisses and fondling touches of soft palms would seem to float about filling the lonely darkness of the apartment, a deal of sweet humming voices would murmur near my ears, perfumed breath would light softly upon my forehead, and a very soft, sweet-scented filmy *orna* would often flutter about and touch my cheeks. A fascinating serpent would gradually appear to coil my whole frame round in its inebriating embrace. I would draw deep breaths, and my torpid frame would be numbed into a heavy slumber.

One fine afternoon I resolved to have a ride; someone seemed to forbid me. I knew not who, but I did not mind the prohibition that day. My western hat and short coat hung upon a wooden frame. I had taken them down and was about to wear them, when a strong gust of whirlwind suddenly rushed up hoisting an ensign of dry leaves from the Aurali hills and sands from the Sustha, caught hold of my hat and coat, and proceeded on spinning them round and round. And a very sweet silvery laugh accompanied the wind, touching all the gradations of merriment as it circled round and round, and rose higher and higher till it reached the notes of the highest octaves and at last melted away near the regions of sunset.

There was to be no riding that afternoon, and from the day

following I gave up entirely the use of the comical short coat and the western hat for ever.

That midnight again I sat up on my bed and listened ; someone had been weeping and the smothered sobs seemed to be bursting her bosom. It seemed as if a wailing voice from below my bed, from beneath the floor, from out of a damp dark grave beneath the lowermost foundation of this stately edifice, had been addressing its plaintive notes to me saying, " O, save me and take me out ! Break through the portals of hard illusion, deep sleep and ineffectual dreams, take me up on horseback, press me nearer to thy bosom, and through the forests and over the hills and across the river take me into your sunlit house ! O, save me ! "

Who am I ! How am I to save her ? What sinking beauty of the longing fancy am I to draw to the bank from out of this convoluting changeful billows of dreams ? When had you been and where, O Beauty celestial ? In the lap of what homeless denizen of the desert, and on the bank of which cool fountain under the shade of date-palm groves, did you take your birth ? What Beduin robber tore you away from your mother's breast like a flower bud from a creeper and rode with you upon a steed of electric pace and crossed the burning sandy expanse ? To which slave market in what prince's dominion did he carry you away for sale ? What Padshah's follower, beholding your newly budding youthful charms borne down by bashfulness, counted out the golden coins and took you away across the sea, and placing you in a golden litter presented you to the harem of his master ? Ah, what a history there ! The music of the *sarangi*, the clinking of the anklets, the gleam of the knife through the golden wine of Shiraz, the smarting poison, the smiting glance. What wealth untold ! What endless durance. A maid waving a fan on either side, the diamonds on her bracelets flashing lightning and the Shahan-Shah Padshah, king of kings, grovelling under those white feet near the slippers studded with gems and pearls, and dressed like an angel and with a bare sword in hand, the Abyssinian slave standing near the outer door like an emissary of death. And after that ? Floating away over the bright though awful blood-stained billows of opulence fraught with intrigues and foamy with envy, to what cruel death hadst thou, frail flower of the desert, descended ? Or else, on what sterner shores of glory hadst thou been stranded ? . . .

Mad Meher Ali then shouted out, "Keep away, keep away ! All false, all false ! " I looked out, it was daybreak. My orderly came and handed me the day's mail, and my cook entered and bowed, and asked my directions as to what I should like to have.

I said, "No, it is not possible to stay in this house any longer." That very day I shifted myself with all my belongings to my office building. The old clerk Karim Khan smiled as he saw me. I was annoyed at his smile and went to work without a word.

As it drew towards afternoon I began to feel absent-minded. It seemed I just had to go somewhere. Examining the cotton accounts seemed an entirely useless piece of work, the sovereignty of the Nizam also did not appear to count for much. Whatever was in existence, going on around and about me and toiling and enjoying, all seemed to me extremely lowly and trivial and void of any significance.

I threw away my pen, closed the bulky ledger, and at once started in the cab. I perceived that it stopped of itself near the gate of the marble palace just at dusk. I passed over the steps of the stairs quickly and entered inside.

All was sombre silence this night. The dark rooms seemed to have put on a very grave face in their petulance. My heart grew full to the brim with repentance, but I could not make out whom to acquaint with it or whose forgiveness I was to crave. In a vacant mood I wandered about the dark rooms. I felt an inclination to take up some instrument and sing to someone and say, "O Fire ! The moth that had left thee has come again to die in thy flames ! Pardon it now, singe both its wings out ; reduce it to ashes ! "

A couple of tear-drops suddenly fell from above upon my forehead. Over the crest of the Aurali hills dense dark clouds had gathered thick. The dark forests and the inky black waters of the Sustha stood still in awful waiting. Earth and air and water suddenly felt a thrill, and all at once like a lunatic that had broken the chain, the hurricane rushed up with terrific screams through the distant pathless forests exhibiting its lightning teeth. The large empty apartments of the mansion slammed all their doors and shrieked violently in their keen anguish.

All the servants were in the office room, and there was none to light a lamp here this night. On that cloud-mantled new

moon night, and in the jet black darkness inside, I began to realise distinctly that someone had flung herself face down upon the carpet beside the bedstead. With her clenched fists she had begun tearing the loosened tresses, and oozing blood had been running copiously along her white forehead. She had now and then been giving vent to sharp, dry, loud cachinations, and soon again lapsing into convulsive sobs and bursting into violent weeping, tearing off her garments with both her hands and striking her bare bosom. The tempest had been roaring in through the open windows and rain in heavy showers drenching her through and through.

Neither the tempest nor the laments would come to an end that night. I rambled about in vain remorse through these rooms in the dark. There was no one anywhere. Whom was I to console ? Whose this violent anger of jealousy ? Whence does all this disconsolate convulsion of grief arise ?

The mad man shouted out, "Keep away, keep away. All false, all false ! "

I saw it was light. Even on this stormy day Meher Ali had been out circling around the palace as usual with his wonted cry. In a flash it struck me that Meher Ali might also have sometime lived in this house like me, and has now come out insane, but still the delusive attractions of this stone monster draws him to take his morning rounds here.

At once I ran out into the rain, and accosted the madman saying, "What is false, Meher Ali ? "

He would vouchsafe no reply, but shoved me aside and wandered screaming all round the structure like a bewitched bird wheeling about in the sphere of a boa's fascination. By way of cautioning himself he kept on shouting with all his might, "Keep away, keep away, all false, all false ! "

Madly through that rain and storm I came to the office, called Karim Khan, and asked him to tell me without reserve what all this meant.

What the old man said was to this effect. Much unsatiated longing and measureless flames of frenzied enjoyment would at one time convulse that palace, the curses of those burning hearts and ungratified desires have dyed all the pieces of stone in this mansion and rendered them so hungry and thirsty, that no sooner did chance bring in a live being than like a tempted demoness they longed to devour him. Among those who have lived in that house for three consecutive nights, it was Mehir

Ali alone who had come out at the sacrifice of his reason. No one else had yet been able to release himself from its grip.

I asked, "Is there then no means for me to be saved?"

The old man replied, "There is only one, and that, too, is fraught with great difficulties. I will presently tell you that. But it is necessary to let you know at the outset the old history of an Iranian slave girl of that *gulhag*, the garden of roses. There had never been a more wondrous and heart-rending incident in the world than that."

The coolies now came and gave notice, the train was coming up. So soon? As we were engaged hastily tying up our beddings the train arrived. An Englishman in a first-class compartment just awakened had thrust his head through the window and been trying to read the name of the station. As soon as he perceived our friend and companion he called out "Hullo!" and took him inside his own carriage.

We got up in the next class and could not make out who our friend was, nor hear the end of the story.

I said, "Indeed, the man must have imposed upon us out of sheer fun, fancying that we were so many simpletons! The whole story is a fabrication!"

In consequence of our discussions in this connection a life-long separation has come about between me and my Theosophist friend.



JAPAN

APPRECIATION of Japanese literature has been fostered by Professor Waley's remarkable translation of the Japanese masterpiece *Genji* by the Lady Murasaki. It was a considerable temptation to include a chapter from that novel, but the extraction of a small excerpt from so long a book would hardly have given the reader any idea of the qualities of this novel. Unfortunately the choice of stories from the Japanese is limited, and I have included a famous work which in truth can hardly be called a story. The "Hojoki" attributed to Kamo no-Chomei was written in A.D. 1212, the title of which means The Ten-Foot Square Hut, is, in fact, reflections of the author. He was an official and suffered deep chagrin when he was not allowed to succeed to the ancestral position of Lord Warden of the Shrine in Kyoto, with a result he became a recluse and retired to a hermitage on Charayama, a not unusual characteristic of Japanese temperament among the nobility.¹ The beauty, however, of his descriptions of scenery and life are like a Japanese painting.

A. B. Mitford's traditional tales of Old Japan are well known and were "adapted" by him for English readers. "The Eta Maiden and the Hatamoto," the story included here, is a moving and tragic tale. The Eta tribe were known as the Pariah race. They were allowed to slay animals, to be leather workers, and only to do menial work. "Several accounts," wrote Mitford in his Introduction to his story, "are given of their origin; the most probable of which is that when Buddhism, the tenets of which forbid the taking of life, was introduced, those who lived by the infliction of death became accursed in the land, their trade being made hereditary as was the office of executioner in some European countries." It was also affirmed that they were descendants of the Tartars left behind by Kublai Khan.

Of the third story by Jun-ichiro Tanizaki, it is one of the few comparatively "modern" stories included in this book. It is chosen because it is still representative of Japan, before she was forced to adopt Western ideologies which have so ill-befitted the land of "Cherry-blossom."

¹ See Introduction to *Tales of the Heike*, translated by Professor A. L. Sadler, Sydney, 1928.



THE ETA MAIDEN AND THE HATAMOTO

ONCE upon a time, some two hundred years ago, there lived at a place called Honjō, in Yedo, a Hatamoto named Genzaburō ; his age was about twenty-four or twenty-five, and he was of extraordinary personal beauty. His official duties made it incumbent on him to go to the castle by way of the Adzuma Bridge, and here it was that a strange adventure befell him. There was a certain Eta, who used to earn his living by going out every day to the Adzuma Bridge, and mending the sandals of the passers-by. Whenever Genzaburō crossed the bridge, the Eta used always to bow to him. This struck him as rather strange ; but one day when Genzaburō was out alone, without any retainers following him, and was passing the Adzuma Bridge, the thong of his sandal suddenly broke ; this annoyed him very much ; however, he recollect ed the Eta cobbler who always used to bow to him so regularly, so he went to the place where he usually sat, and ordered him to mend his sandal, saying to him, " Tell me why it is that every time that I pass by this bridge you salute me so respectfully. " *

When the Eta heard this, he was put out of countenance, and for a while he remained silent ; but at last taking courage, he said to Genzaburô, " Sir, having been honoured with your commands, I am quite put to shame. I was originally a gardener, and used to go to your honour's house and lend a hand in trimming up the garden. In those days your honour was very young, and I myself little better than a child ; and so I used to play with your honour, and received many kindnesses at your hands. My name, sir, is Chokichi. Since those days I have fallen by degrees into dissolute habits, and little by little have sunk to be the vile thing that you now see me."

When Genzaburô heard this he was very much surprised, and, recollecting his old friendship for his playmate, was filled with pity, and said, " Surely, surely, you have fallen very low. Now all you have to do is to persevere and use your utmost endeavours to find a means of escape from the class into which you have fallen, and become a wardsman again. Take this sum : small as it is, let it be a foundation for more to you." And with these words he took ten riyos out of his pouch and handed them to Chokichi, who at first refused to accept the present, but, when it was pressed upon him, received it with thanks. Genzaburô was leaving him to go home, when two wandering singing-girls came up and spoke to Chokichi ; so Genzaburô looked to see what the two women were like. One was a woman of some twenty years of age, and the other was a peerlessly beautiful girl of sixteen ; she was neither too fat nor too thin, neither too tall nor too short ; her face was oval, like a melon-seed, and her complexion fair and white ; her eyes were narrow and bright, her teeth small and even ; her nose was aquiline, and her mouth delicately formed, with lovely red lips ; her eyebrows were long and fine ; she had a profusion of long black hair ; she spoke modestly, with a soft sweet voice ; and when she smiled, two lovely dimples appeared in her cheeks ; in all her movements she was gentle and refined. Genzaburô fell in love with her at first sight ; and she, seeing what a handsome man he was, equally fell in love with him ; so that the woman that was with her, perceiving that they were struck with one another, led her away as fast as possible.

Genzaburô remained as one stupefied, and, turning to Chokichi, said, " Are you acquainted with those two women who came up just now ? "

"Sir," replied Chokichi, "those are two women of our people. The elder woman is called O Kuma and the girl, who is only sixteen years old, is named O Koyo. She is the daughter of one Kihachi, a chief of the Etas. She is a very gentle girl, besides being so exceedingly pretty; and all our people are loud in her praise."

When he heard this, Genzaburô remained lost in thought for a while, and then he said to Chokichi, "I want you to do something for me. Are you prepared to serve me in whatever respect I may require you?"

Chokichi answered that he was prepared to do anything in his power to oblige his honour. Upon this, Genzaburô smiled and said, "Well, then, I am willing to employ you in a certain matter; but as there are a great number of passers-by here, I will go and wait for you in a tea-house at Hanakawado; and when you have finished your business here, you can join me, and I will speak to you." With these words Genzaburô left him, and went off to the tea-house.

When Chokichi had finished his work, he changed his clothes, and, hurrying to the tea-house, inquired for Genzaburô, who was waiting for him upstairs. Chokichi went up to him, and began to thank him for the money which he had bestowed upon him. Genzaburô smiled, and handed him a wine-cup, inviting him to drink, and said: "I will tell you the service upon which I wish to employ you. I have set my heart upon that girl O Koyo, whom I met to-day upon the Adzuma Bridge, and you must arrange a meeting between us."

When Chokichi heard these words, he was amazed and frightened, and for a while he made no answer. At last he said: "Sir, there is nothing that I would not do for you after the favours that I have received from you. If this girl were the daughter of any ordinary man, I would move heaven and earth to comply with your wishes: but for your honour, a handsome and noble Hatamoto, to take for his concubine the daughter of an Eta is a great mistake. By giving a little money you can get the handsomest woman in the town. Pray, sir, abandon the idea."

Upon this Genzaburô was offended, and said: "This is no matter for you to give advice in. I have told you to get me the girl, and you must obey."

Chokichi, seeing that all that he could say would be of no avail, thought over in his mind how to bring about a meeting

between Genzaburô and O Koyo, and replied: "Sir, I am afraid when I think of the liberty that I have taken. I will go to Kihachi's house, and will use my best endeavours with him that I may bring the girl to you. But for to-day, it is getting late, and night is coming on; so I will go and speak to her father to-morrow."

Genzaburô was delighted to find Chokichi willing to serve him. "Well," said he, "the day after to-morrow I will await you at the tea-house at Oji, and you can bring O Koyo there. Take this present, small as it is, and do your best for me."

With this he pulled out three riyos from his pocket and handed them to Chokichi, who declined the money with thanks, saying that he had already received too much, and could accept no more; but Genzaburô pressed him, adding, that if the wish of his heart were accomplished he would do still more for him. So Chokichi, in great glee at the good luck which had befallen him, began to revolve all sorts of schemes in his mind; and the two parted.

But O Koyo, who had fallen in love at first sight with Genzaburô on the Adzuma Bridge, went home and could think of nothing but him. Sad and melancholy she sat, and her friend O Kuma tried to comfort her in various ways; but O Koyo yearned, with all her heart, for Genzaburô; and the more she thought over the matter, the better she perceived that she, as the daughter of an Eta, was no match for a noble Hatamoto. And yet, in spite of this, she pined for him, and bewailed her own vile condition.

Now it happened that her friend O Kuma was in love with Chokichi, and only cared for thinking and speaking of him. One day, when Chokichi went to pay a visit at the house of Kihachi the Eta chief, O Kuma, seeing him come, was highly delighted, and received him very politely; and Chokichi, interrupting her, said: "O Kuma, I want you to answer me a question: where has O Koyo gone to amuse herself to-day?"

"Oh, you know the gentlemen who was talking with you the other day, at the Adzuma Bridge? Well, O Koyo has fallen desperately in love with him, and she says that she is too low-spirited and out of sorts to get up yet."

Chokichi was greatly pleased to hear this, and said to O Kuma—"How delightful! Why, O Koyo has fallen in love with the very gentleman who is burning with passion for her, and who has employed me to help him in the matter. However,

as he is a noble Hatamoto, and his whole family would be ruined if the affair became known to the world, we must endeavour to keep it as secret as possible."

"Dear me!" replied O Kuma; "when O Koyo hears this, how happy she will be, to be sure! I must go and tell her at once."

"Stop!" said Chokichi, detaining her; "if her father, Master Kihachi, is willing, we will tell O Koyo directly. You had better wait here a little until I have consulted him"; and with this he went into an inner chamber to see Kihachi; and, after talking over the news of the day, told him how Genzaburō had fallen passionately in love with O Koyo, and had employed him as a go-between. Then he described how he had received kindness at the hands of Genzaburō when he was in better circumstances, dwelt on the wonderful personal beauty of his lordship, and upon the lucky chance by which he and O Koyo had come to meet each other.

When Kihachi heard this story, he was greatly flattered, and said: "I am sure I am very much obliged to you. For one of our daughters, whom even the common people despise and shun as a pollution, to be chosen as the concubine of a noble Hatamoto—what could be a greater matter for congratulation!"

So he prepared a feast for Chokichi, and went off at once to tell O Koyo the news. As for the maiden, who had fallen over head and ears in love, there was no difficulty in obtaining her consent to all that was asked of her.

Accordingly Chokichi, having arranged to bring the lovers together on the following day at Oji, was preparing to go and report the glad tidings to Genzaburō; but O Koyo, who knew that her friend O Kuma was in love with Chokichi, and thought that if she could throw them into one another's arms, they, on their side, would tell no tales about herself and Genzaburō, worked to such good purpose that she gained her point. At last Chokichi, tearing himself from the embraces of O Kuma, returned to Genzaburō, and told him how he had laid his plans so as, without fail, to bring O Koyo to him, the following day, at Oji; and Genzaburō, beside himself with impatience, waited for the morrow.

The next day Genzaburō, having made his preparations, and taking Chokichi with him, went to the tea-house at Oji, and sat drinking wine, waiting for his sweetheart to come.

As for O Koyo, who was half in ecstasies, and half shy at the

idea of meeting on this day the man of her heart's desire, she put on her holiday clothes, and went with O Kuma to Oji ; and as they went out together, her natural beauty being enhanced by her smart dress, all the people turned round to look at her, and praise her pretty face. And so, after a while, they arrived at Oji, and went into the tea-house that had been agreed upon ; and Chokichi, going out to meet them, exclaimed, " Dear me, Miss O Koyo, his lordship has been all impatience waiting for you : pray make haste and come in."

But, in spite of what he said, O Koyo, on account of her virgin modesty, would not go in. O Kuma, however, who was not quite so particular, cried out, " Why, what is the meaning of this ? As you've come here, O Koyo, it's a little late for you to be making a fuss about being shy. Don't be a little fool, but come in with me at once." And with these words she caught fast hold of O Koyo's hand, and, pulling her by force into the room, made her sit down by Genzaburô.

When Genzaburô saw how modest she was, he reassured her, saying : " Come, what is there to be so shy about ? Come a little nearer to me, pray."

" Thank you, sir. How could I, who am such a vile thing, pollute your nobility by sitting by your side ? " And, as she spoke, the blushes mantled over her face ; and the more Genzaburô looked at her, the more beautiful she appeared in his eyes, and the more deeply he became enamoured of her charms. In the meanwhile he called for wine and fish, and all four together made a feast of it. When Chokichi and O Kuma saw how the land lay, they retired discreetly into another chamber, and Genzaburô and O Koyo were left alone together, looking at one another.

" Come," said Genzaburô, smiling, " hadn't you better sit a little closer to me ? "

" Thank you, sir ; really I'm afraid."

But Genzaburô, laughing at her for her idle fears, said, " Don't behave as if you hated me."

" Oh, dear ! I'm sure I don't hate you, sir. That would be very rude ; and indeed, it's not the case. I loved you when I first saw you at the Adzuma Bridge, and longed for you with all my heart ; but I knew what a despised race I belonged to, and that I was no fitting match for you, and so I tried to be resigned. But I am very young and inexperienced, and so I could not help thinking of you, and you alone ; and then Chokichi came, and

when I heard what you had said about me, I thought, in the joy of my heart, that it must be a dream of happiness."

And as she spoke these words, blushing timidly, Genzaburō was dazzled with her beauty, and said: "Well, you're a clever child. I'm sure, now, you must have some handsome young lover of your own, and that is why you don't care to come and drink wine and sit by me. Am I not right, eh?"

"Ah, sir, a nobleman like you is sure to have a beautiful wife at home; and then you are so handsome that, of course, all the pretty young ladies are in love with you."

"Nonsense! Why, how clever you are at flattering and paying compliments! A pretty little creature like you was just made to turn all the men's heads—a little witch."

"Ah! those are hard things to say of a poor girl! Who could think of falling in love with such a wretch as I am? Now, pray tell me all about your own sweetheart: I do so long to hear about her."

"Silly child! I'm not the sort of man to put thoughts into the heads of fair ladies. However, it is quite true that there is someone whom I want to marry."

At this O Koyo began to feel jealous. "Ah!" said she, "how happy that someone must be! Do, pray, tell me the whole story." And a feeling of jealous spite came over her, and made her quite unhappy.

Genzaburō laughed as he answered: "Well, that someone is yourself, and nobody else. There!" and as he spoke, he gently tapped the dimple on her cheek with his finger; and O Koyo's heart beat so, for very joy, that, for a little while, she remained speechless. At last she turned her face towards Genzaburō, and said: "Alas! your lordship is only trifling with me, when you know that what you have just been pleased to propose is the darling wish of my heart. Would that I could only go into your house as a maid-servant, in any capacity, however mean, that I might daily feast my eyes on your handsome face!"

"Ah! I see that you think yourself very clever at hoaxing men, and so you must needs tease me a little"; and, as he spoke, he took her hand, and drew her close up to him, and she, blushing again, cried: "Oh! pray wait a moment, while I shut the sliding doors."

"Listen to me, O Koyo! I am not going to forget the promise which I made you just now; nor need you be afraid of my harming you; but take care that you do not deceive me."

"Indeed, sir, the fear is rather that you should set your heart on others ; but, although I am no fashionable lady, take pity on me, and love me well and long."

"Of course ! I shall never care for another woman but you."

"Pray, pray, never forget those words that you have just spoken."

"And now," replied Genzaburô, "the night is advancing, and, for to-day, we must part ; but we will arrange matters, so as to meet again in this tea-house. But, as people would make remarks if we left the tea-house together, I will go out first."

And so, much against their will, they tore themselves from one another, Genzaburô returning to his house, and O Koyo going home, her heart filled with joy at having found the man for whom she had pined ; and from that day forth they used constantly to meet in secret at the tea-house ; and Genzaburô in his infatuation never thought that the matter must surely become notorious after a while, and that he himself would be banished and his family ruined : he only took care for the pleasure of the moment.

Now Chokichi, who had brought about the meeting between Genzaburô and his love, used to go every day to the tea-house at Oji, taking with him O Koyo ; and Genzaburô neglected all his duties for the pleasure of these secret meetings. Chokichi saw this with great regret, and thought to himself that if Genzaburô gave himself up entirely to pleasure, and laid aside his duties, the secret would certainly be made public, and Genzaburô would bring ruin on himself and his family ; so he began to devise some plan by which he might separate them, and plotted as eagerly to estrange them as he had formerly done to introduce them to one another.

At last he hit upon a device which satisfied him. Accordingly one day he went to O Koyo's house, and, meeting her father Kihachi, said to him : "I've got a sad piece of news to tell you. The family of my lord Genzaburô have been complaining bitterly of his conduct in carrying on his relationship with your daughter, and of the ruin which exposure would bring upon the whole house ; so they have been using their influence to persuade him to hear reason, and give up the connection. Now his lordship feels deeply for the damsel, and yet he cannot sacrifice his family for her sake. For the first

time, he has become alive to the folly of which he has been guilty, and, full of remorse, he has commissioned me to devise some stratagem to break off the affair. Of course, this has taken me by surprise ; but as there is no gainsaying the right of the case, I have no option but to promise obedience : this promise I have come to redeem ; and now, pray, advise your daughter to think no more of his lordship."

When Kihachi heard this he was surprised and distressed, and told O Koyo immediately ; and she, grieving over the sad news, took no thought either of eating or drinking, but remained gloomy and desolate.

In the meanwhile, Chokichi went off to Genzaburô's house, and told him that O Koyo had been taken suddenly ill, and could not go to meet him, and begged him to wait patiently until she should send to tell him of her recovery. Genzaburô, never suspecting the story to be false, waited for thirty days, and still Chokichi brought him no tidings of O Koyo. At last he met Chokichi, and besought him to arrange a meeting for him with O Koyo.

"Sir," replied Chokichi, "she is not yet recovered ; so it would be difficult to bring her to see your honour. But I have been thinking much about this affair, sir. If it becomes public, your honour's family will be plunged in ruin. I pray you, sir, to forget all about O Koyo."

"It's all very well for you to give me advice," answered Genzaburô, surprised ; "but, having once bound myself to O Koyo, it would be a pitiful thing to desert her ; I therefore implore you once more to arrange that I may meet her."

However, he would not consent upon any account ; so Genzaburô returned home, and, from that time forth, daily entreated Chokichi to bring O Koyo to him, and, receiving nothing but advice from him in return, was very sad and lonely.

One day Genzaburô, intent on ridding himself of the grief he felt at his separation from O Koyo, went to the Yoshiwara, and, going into a house of entertainment, ordered a feast to be prepared ; but, in the midst of gaiety, his heart yearned all the while for his lost love, and his merriment was but mourning in disguise. At last the night wore on ; and as he was retiring along the corridor, he saw a man of about forty years of age, with long hair, coming towards him, who, when he saw Genzaburô, cried out, "Dear me ! why this must be my young lord Genzaburô who has come out to enjoy himself."

Genzaburô thought this rather strange ; but, looking at the man attentively, recognised him as a retainer whom he had had in his employ the year before, and said : " This is a curious meeting ; pray what have you been about since you left my service ? At any rate, I may congratulate you on being well and strong. Where are you living now ? "

" Well, sir, since I parted from you I have been earning a living as a fortune-teller at Kanda, and have changed my name to Kaji Sazen. I am living in a poor and humble house ; but if your lordship, at your leisure, would honour me with a visit——"

" Well, it's a lucky chance that has brought us together, and I certainly will go and see you ; besides, I want you to do something for me. Shall you be at home the day after to-morrow ? "

" Certainly, sir, I shall make a point of being at home."

" Very well, then, the day after to-morrow I will go to your house."

" I shall be at your service, sir. And now, as it is getting late, I will take my leave for to-night."

" Good night, then. We shall meet the day after to-morrow." And so the two parted, and went their several ways to rest.

On the appointed day Genzaburô made his preparations, and went in disguise, without any retainers, to call upon Sazen, who met him at the porch of his house, and said, " This is a great honour ! My lord Genzaburô is indeed welcome. My house is very mean, but let me invite your lordship to come into an inner chamber."

" Pray," replied Genzaburô, " don't make any ceremony for me. Don't put yourself to any trouble on my account."

And so he passed in, and Sazen called to his wife to prepare wine and condiments ; and they began to feast. At last Genzaburô, looking Sazen in the face, said, " There is a service which I want you to render me—a very secret service ; but as, if you were to refuse me, I should be put to shame, before I tell you what that service is, I must know whether you are willing to assist me in anything that I may require of you."

" Yes, if it is anything that is within my power, I am at your disposal."

" Well, then," said Genzaburô, greatly pleased, and drawing ten riyos from his bosom, " this is but a small present to make to you on my first visit, but pray accept it."

" No, indeed ! I don't know what your lordship wishes of

me ; but, at any rate, I cannot receive this money. I really must beg your lordship to take it back again."

But Genzaburō pressed it upon him by force, and at last he was obliged to accept the money. Then Genzaburō told him the whole story of his loves with O Koyo—how he had first met her and fallen in love with her at the Adzuma Bridge ; how Chokichi had introduced her to him at the tea-house at Oji, and then when she fell ill, and he wanted to see her again, instead of bringing her to him, had only given him good advice : and so Genzaburō drew a lamentable picture of his state of despair.

Sazen listened patiently to his story, and, after reflecting for a while, replied, " Well, sir, it's not a difficult matter to set right ; and yet it will require some little management. However, if your lordship will do me the honour of coming to see me again the day after to-morrow, I will cast about me in the meanwhile, and will let you know then the result of my deliberations."

When Genzaburō heard this he felt greatly relieved, and recommending Sazen to do his best in the matter, took his leave and returned home. That very night Sazen, after thinking over all that Genzaburō had told him, laid his plans accordingly, and went off to the house of Kihachi, the Eta chief, and told him the commission with which he had been entrusted.

Kihachi was of course greatly astonished, and said, " Some time ago, sir, Chokichi came here and said that my lord Genzaburō, having been rebuked by his family for his profligate behaviour, had determined to break off his connection with my daughter. Of course I knew that the daughter of an Eta was no fitting match for a nobleman ; so when Chokichi came and told me the errand upon which he had been sent, I had no alternative but to announce to my daughter that she must give up all thought of his lordship. Since that time she has been fretting and pining and starving for love. But when I tell her what you have just said, how glad and happy she will be ! Let me go and talk to her at once." And with these words, he went to O Koyo's room ; and when he looked upon her thin wasted face, and saw how sad she was, he felt more and more pity for her, and said, " Well, O Koyo, are you in better spirits to-day ? Would you like something to eat ? "

" Thank you I have no appetite."

" Well, at any rate, I have some news for you that will

make you happy. A messenger has come from my lord Genzaburō, for whom your heart yearns."

At this O Koyo, who had been crouching down like a drooping flower, gave a great start, and cried out, "Is that really true? Pray tell me all about it as quickly as possible."

"The story which Chokichi came and told us, that his lordship wished to break off the connection, was all an invention. He has all along been wishing to meet you, and constantly urged Chokichi to bring you a message from him. It is Chokichi who has been throwing obstacles in the way. At last his lordship has secretly sent a man called Kaji Sazen, a fortune-teller, to arrange an interview between you. So now, my child, you may cheer up, and go to meet your lover as soon as you please."

When O Koyo heard this, she was so happy that she thought it must all be a dream, and doubted her own senses.

Kihachi in the meanwhile rejoined Sazen in the other room, and, after telling him of the joy with which his daughter had heard the news, put before him wine and other delicacies. "I think," said Sazen, "that the best way would be for O Koyo to live secretly in my lord Genzaburō's house; but it will never do for all the world to know of it, it must be managed very quietly; and further, when I get home, I must think out some plan to lull the suspicions of that fellow Chokichi, and let you know my idea by letter. Meanwhile, O Koyo had better come home with me to-night: although she is so terribly out of spirits now, she shall meet Genzaburō the day after to-morrow."

Kihachi reported this to O Koyo; and as her pining for Genzaburō was the only cause of her sickness, she recovered her spirits at once, and, saying that she would go with Sazen immediately, joyfully made her preparations. Then Sazen, having once more warned Kihachi to keep the matter secret from Chokichi, and to act upon the letter which he should send him, returned home, taking with him O Koyo; and after O Koyo had bathed and dressed her hair, and painted herself and put on beautiful clothes, she came out looking so lovely that no princess in the land could vie with her; and Sazen, when he saw her, said to himself that it was no wonder that Genzaburō had fallen in love with her; then, as it was getting late, he advised her to go to rest, and, after showing her to her apartments, went to his own room and wrote his letter to Kihachi, containing the scheme which he had devised. When

Kihachi received his instructions, he was filled with admiration at Sazen's ingenuity, and, putting on an appearance of great alarm and agitation, went off immediately to call on Chokichi, and said to him: "Oh, Master Chokichi, such a terrible thing has happened! Pray let me tell you all about it."

"Indeed! What can it be?"

"Oh! sir," answered Kihachi, pretending to wipe away his tears, "my daughter O Koyo, mourning over her separation from my lord Genzaburô, at first refused all sustenance, and remained nursing her sorrows until, last night, her woman's heart failing to bear up against her great grief, she drowned herself in the river, leaving behind her a paper on which she had written her intention."

When Chokichi heard this, he was thunderstruck, and exclaimed, "Can this really be true! And when I think that it was I who first introduced her to my lord, I am ashamed to look you in the face."

"Oh, say not so: misfortunes are the punishment due for our misdeeds in a former state of existence. I bear you no ill will. This money which I hold in my hand was my daughter's; and in her last instructions she wrote to beg that it might be given, after her death, to you, through whose intervention she became allied with a nobleman; so please accept it as my daughter's legacy to you." And as he spoke, he offered him three riyos.

"You amaze me!" replied the other. "How could I, above all men, who have so much to reproach myself with in my conduct towards you, accept this money?"

"Nay; it was my dead daughter's wish. But since you reproach yourself in the matter when you think of her, I will beg you to put up a prayer and to cause masses to be said for her."

At last, Chokichi, after much persuasion, and greatly to his own distress, was obliged to accept the money; and when Kihachi had carried out all Sazen's instructions, he returned home, laughing in his sleeve.

Chokichi was sorely grieved to hear of O Koyo's death, and remained thinking over the sad news; when all of a sudden looking about him, he saw something like a letter lying on the spot where Kihachi had been sitting, so he picked it up and read it: and, as luck would have it, it was the very letter which contained Sazen's instructions to Kihachi, and in which the whole story which had just affected him so much was made up. When

he perceived the trick that had been played upon him, he was very angry, and exclaimed, "To think that I should have been so hoaxed by that hateful old dotard, and such a fellow as Sazen! And Genzaburô, too—out of gratitude for the favours which I had received from him in old days, I faithfully gave him good advice, and all in vain. Well, they've gulled me once; but I'll be even with them yet, and hinder their game before it is played out!" And so he worked himself up into a fury, and went off secretly to prowl about Sazen's house to watch for O Koyo, determined to pay off Genzaburô and Sazen for their conduct to him.

In the meanwhile Sazen, who did not for a moment suspect what had happened, when the day which had been fixed upon by him and Genzaburô arrived, made O Koyo put on her best clothes, smartened up his house, and got ready a feast against Genzaburô's arrival. The latter came punctually to his time, and, going in at once, said to the fortune-teller, "Well, have you succeeded in the commission with which I entrusted you?"

At first Sazen pretended to be vexed at the question, and said, "Well, sir, I've done my best; but it's not a matter which can be settled in a hurry. However, there's a young lady of high birth and wonderful beauty upstairs, who has come here secretly to have her fortune told; and if your lordship would like to come with me and see her, you can do so."

But Genzaburô, when he heard that he was not to meet O Koyo, lost heart entirely, and made up his mind to go home again. Sazen, however, pressed him so eagerly, that at last he went upstairs to see this vaunted beauty; and Sazen, drawing aside a screen, showed him O Koyo, who was sitting there. Genzaburô gave a great start, and, turning to Sazen, said, "Well, you certainly are a first-rate hand at keeping up a hoax. However, I cannot sufficiently praise the way in which you have carried out my instructions."

"Pray, don't mention it, sir. But as it is a long time since you have met the young lady, you must have a great deal to say to one another; so I will go downstairs, and, if you want anything, pray call me." And so he went downstairs and left them.

Then Genzaburô, addressing O Koyo, said, "Ah! it is indeed a long time since we met. How happy it makes me to see you again! Why, your face has grown quite thin. Poor thing? have you been unhappy?" And O Koyo, with the tears starting from her eyes for joy, hid her face; and her heart

was so full that she could not speak. But Genzaburō, passing his hand gently over her head and back, and comforting her, said, "Come, sweetheart, there is no need to sob so. Talk to me a little, and let me hear your voice."

At last O Koyo raised her head and said, "Ah! when I was separated from you by the tricks of Chokichi, and thought that I should never meet you again, how tenderly I thought of you! I thought I should have died, and waited for my hour to come, pining all the while for you. And when at last, as I lay between life and death, Sazen came with a message from you, I thought it was all a dream." And as she spoke, she bent her head and sobbed again; and in Genzaburō's eyes she seemed more beautiful than ever, with her pale delicate face; and he loved her better than before. Then she said, "If I were to tell you all I have suffered until to-day, I should never stop."

"Yes," replied Genzaburō, "I too have suffered much"; and so they told one another their mutual griefs, and from that day forth they constantly met at Sazen's house.

One day, as they were feasting and enjoying themselves in an upper story in Sazen's house, Chokichi came to the house and said, "I beg pardon, but does one Master Sazen live here?"

"Certainly, sir: I am Sazen, at your service. Pray where are you from?"

"Well, sir, I have a little business to transact with you. May I make so bold as to go in?" And with these words, he entered the house.

"But who and what are you?" said Sazen.

"Sir, I am an Eta; and my name is Chokichi. I beg to bespeak your goodwill for myself; I hope we may be friends."

Sazen was not a little taken aback at this; however, he put on an innocent face, as though he had never heard of Chokichi before, and said: "I never heard of such a thing! Why, I thought you were some respectable person; and you have the impudence to tell me that your name is Chokichi, and that you're one of those accursed Etas. To think of such a shameless villain coming and asking to be friends with me, forsooth! Get you gone! the quicker, the better: your presence pollutes the house."

Chokichi smile contemptuously, as he answered, "So you deem the presence of an Eta in your house a pollution, eh? Why, I thought you must be one of us."

"Insolent knave! Begone as fast as possible."

"Well, since you say that I defile your house, you had better get rid of O Koyo as well. I suppose she must equally be a pollution to it."

This put Sazen in a dilemma; however, he made up his mind not to show any hesitation, and said, "What are you talking about? There is no O Koyo here; and I never saw such a person in my life."

Chokichi quietly drew out of the bosom of his dress the letter from Sazen to Kihachi, which he had picked up a few days before, and, showing it to Sazen, replied, "If you wish to dispute the genuineness of this paper, I will report the whole matter to the Governor of Yedo; and Genzaburō's family will be ruined, and the rest of you who are parties in this affair will come in for your share of trouble. Just wait a little."

And as he pretended to leave the house, Sazen, at his wits' end, cried out, "Stop! stop! I want to speak to you. Pray, stop and listen quietly. It is quite true, as you said, that O Koyo is in my house; and really your indignation is perfectly just. Come! let us talk over matters a little. Now you yourself were originally a respectable man; and although you have fallen in life, there is no reason why your disgrace should last for ever. All that you want in order to enable you to escape out of this fraternity of *Etas* is a little money. Why should you not get this from Genzaburō, who is very anxious to keep his intrigue with O Koyo secret?"

Chokichi laughed disdainfully. "I am ready to talk with you; but I don't want any money. All I want is to report the affair to the authorities, in order that I may be revenged for the fraud that was put upon me."

"Won't you accept twenty-five riyos?"

"Twenty-five riyos! No, indeed! I will not take a fraction less than a hundred; and if I cannot get them I will report the whole matter at once."

Sazen, after a moment's consideration, hit upon a scheme, and answered, smiling, "Well, Master Chokichi, you're a fine fellow, and I admire your spirit. You shall have the hundred riyos you ask for; but, as I have not so much money by me at present, I will go to Genzaburō's house and fetch it. It's getting dark now, but it's not very late; so I'll trouble you to come with me, and then I can give you the money to-night."

Chokichi consenting to this, the pair left the house together.

Now, Sazen, who as a Rônin, wore a long dirk in his girdle, kept looking out for a moment when Chokichi should be off his guard, in order to kill him ; but Chokichi kept his eyes open, and did not give Sazen a chance. At last Chokichi, as ill-luck would have it, stumbled against a stone and fell ; and Sazen, profiting by the chance, drew his dirk and stabbed him in the side ; and as Chokichi, taken by surprise, tried to get up, he cut him severely over the head, until at last he fell dead. Sazen then looking around him, and seeing, to his great delight, that there was no one near, returned home. The following day, Chokichi's body was found by the police ; and when they examined it, they found nothing upon it save a paper, which they read, and which proved to be the very letter which Sazen had sent to Kihachi, and which Chokichi had picked up. The matter was immediately reported to the governor, and, Sazen having been summoned, an investigation was held. Sazen, cunning and bold murderer as he was, lost his self-possession when he saw what a fool he had been not to get back from Chokichi the letter which he had written, and, when he was put to a rigid examination under torture, confessed that he had hidden O Koyo at Genzaburô's instigation, and then killed Chokichi, who had found out the secret. Upon this the governor after consulting about Genzaburô's case, decided that, as he had disgraced his position as a Hatamoto by contracting an alliance with the daughter of an Eta, his property should be confiscated, his family blotted out, and himself banished. As for Kihachi, the Eta chief, and his daughter O Koyo, they were handed over for punishment to the chief of the Etas, and by him they too were banished ; while Sazen, against whom the murder of Chokichi had been fully proved, was executed according to law.

THE HŌJŌKI OR THE TEN-FOOT SQUARE HUT

CEASELESSLY the river flows, and yet the water is never the same, while in the still pools the shifting foam gathers and is gone, never staying for a moment. Even so is man and his habitation.

In the stately ways of our shining Capital the dwellings of high and low raise their roofs in rivalry as in the beginning, but few indeed there are that have stood for many generations. This year falling into decay and the next built up again, how often does the mansion of one age turn into the cottages of the next. And so, too, are they who live in them. The streets of the city are thronged as of old, but of the many people we meet there how very few are those that we knew in our youth. Dead in the morning and born at night, so man goes on for ever, unenduring as the foam on the water.

And this man that is born and dies, who knows whence he came and whither he goes? And who knows also why with so much labour he builds his house, or how such things can give him pleasure? Like the dew on the morning glory are man and his house, who knows which will survive the other? The dew may fall and the flower remain, but only to wither in the morning sun, or the dew may stay on the withered flower, but it will not see another evening.

During the forty years or so that I have lived since I began to understand the meaning of things I have seen not a few strange happenings.

In the third year of the era Angen,¹ and the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month I think it was, the wind blew a gale, and at the hour of the Dog (8 p.m.) a fire started in the south-east of the Capital and was blown across to the north-west. And everything as far as the Shujaku Gate, the Daikyoku Hall and the Office of Internal Affairs was reduced to ashes in a single night. They say it started at Higuchi Tominokōji in a temporary structure used as a hospital. Now as the flames came on they

¹ A.D. 1175.

spread out like an opened fan, and the remoter houses were smothered in smoke while those nearer roared up in flames. The sky was dark with ashes and against this black background the fire glowed red like early dawn, while everywhere the flames driven by the wind went leaping on over a space more than a hundred yards wide. And of those caught by it some fell choked in the smoke, while others were overtaken by the flames and perished suddenly. And those few who managed with difficulty to escape were quite unable to take their goods with them, and how many precious treasures were thus lost none can tell.

Of the palaces of the Great Nobles sixteen were entirely destroyed, and of the houses of lesser people the number is unknown. One-third of the city was burnt and many thousands must have perished, and cattle and horses beyond reckoning. The handiwork of man is a vain thing enough in any place, but to spend money and time on building houses in such a dangerous spot as the Capital is foolish indeed beyond measure.

Then again in the fourth year of the era Jisho, the fourth month and about the twenty-ninth day a great typhoon blew with immense violence from the neighbourhood of Naka-no-Mikado and Kyōgoku towards Rokujō. For the space of nearly a quarter of a mile it raged, and of the houses within its reach there were none, great or small, that it did not throw down. Of some the whole house fell flat, and of others the roof or the gate was taken off and blown, it may be, some five hundred yards. Others again had their boundary walls levelled, so that there was nothing between them and their neighbour's premises. Household treasures were blown up into the air and destroyed and pieces of board and shingles filled the air like driven leaves in winter. The dust was as thick as smoke, and the roar of the wind so loud that none could hear the other speak. I suppose the bitter wind of Karma that blows us to Hell could not be more savage or fearsome.

And not only were the houses damaged, but a number of people were lamed and hurt in trying to repair them. This whirlwind eventually veered round to the south-west and fresh shouts of distress arose. It is true these winds are not infrequent, but yet there were very many who said: "Ah, this must be the portent of some dreadful happening."

And in the Waterless Month (sixth) of the same year, suddenly and without warning, the Capital was changed. And this

was a most extraordinary thing, for they say that the Capital was first fixed here in the august age of the Mikado Saga, and so it has remained for all these centuries. And thus to change it without any good reason was a very great mistake, and it was no wonder that the people should complain and lament. Still that was, of course, quite unavailing, and all the inhabitants, beginning with his august Majesty the Mikado, and the Ministers and the Great Nobles of the Court, had perforce to remove to the new Capital at Naniwa in Settsu.

And of those who wished to get on in the world who would stay in the former capital ? All those who coveted court rank, or were the expectant clients of some great lord, hustled about to get away as soon as possible. It was only a few unadaptable people who had nothing to hope for, who stayed behind in the ancient capital.

And those mansions that stood so proudly side by side from day to day became more ruinous. Many were broken up and floated down the river Yodo, while their pleasure grounds were turned into rice-fields. And the fashions changed also in these days, so that everyone came to ride on horseback, while the more dignified ox-car was quite forsaken. And everybody was scrambling to get land by the Western Sea and none cared for manors in the north and east.

Now it happened at this time that I chanced to go down myself to the new Capital in the province of Settsu. And when I came to look at it the site was cramped and too narrow to lay out the avenues properly. And the mountains towered over it to the north while the sea hemmed it in on the south, and the noise of the waves and the scent of the brine were indeed too much to be borne.

The Palace was right up against the hills, a "Log-hut Palace" built of round timbers. It all seemed so very strange and rough, and yet somehow not a little elegant. And as for all those houses that had been broken up and brought down, so that the river was almost dammed up by them, I wondered wherever they were going to put them, for still there was so much empty ground, and very few dwellings had been built. So the old Capital was already a waste and the new one not yet made. Everyone felt as unsettled as drifting clouds. And the natives of the place were full of complaints over losing their land, while the new inhabitants grumbled at the difficulty of building on such a site. And of the people one met in the streets those who

ought to have been riding in carriages were on horseback, and those who usually wore court costume were in military surcoats. The whole atmosphere of the Capital was altered and they looked like a lot of country samurai. And those who said that these changes were a portent of some civil disturbance seemed to be not without reason, for as time went on things became more and more unquiet and there was a feeling of unrest everywhere.

But the murmurings of the people proved of some effect, for in the following winter they were ordered back to the ancient Capital. But all the same the houses that had been destroyed and removed could not at once be restored to their former condition.

Now we learn that in the dim ages of the past, in the august era of a certain most revered Mikado, the Empire was ruled with great kindness ; that the Palace was thatched with reeds and its eaves were not repaired, because it was seen that little smoke went up from the houses, and the taxes were on that account remitted. So did the sovereign have pity on his people and help them in their distress. When we compare it with these ancient days we can well understand what a time we live in. And if this were not enough, in the era Yowa ² I think it was, but so many years have elapsed that I am not certain, there were two years of famine, and a terrible time indeed it was. The spring and summer were scorching hot, and the autumn and winter brought typhoons and floods, and as one bad season followed another the Five Cereals could not ripen. In vain was the spring ploughing and the summer sowing was but labour lost. Neither did you hear the joyous clamour of the harvest and the storing in autumn and winter.

Some deserted their land and went to other provinces, and others left their houses and dwelt in the hills. Then all sorts of prayers were said and special services recited, but things grew no better. And since for everything the people of the Capital had to depend on the country around it, when no farmers came in with food how could they continue their usual existence ? Though householders brought out their goods into the street and besought people to buy like beggars with no sense of shame, yet no one would even look at them, and if there should be any ready to barter they held money cheap enough, but could hardly be brought to part with grain. Beggars filled the streets and their clamour was deafening to the ears.

So then the first year passed and it was difficult enough to live, but when we looked for some improvement during the next it was even worse, for a pestilence followed, and the prayers of the people were of no effect. As the days passed they felt like fish when the water dries up, and respectable citizens who ordinarily wore hats and shoes now went barefooted begging from house to house. And while you looked in wonder at such a sight they would suddenly fall down and die in the road. And by the walls and in the highways you could see everywhere the bodies of those who had died of starvation. And as there was none to take them away, a terrible stench filled the streets, and people went by with their eyes averted. The ordinary roads were bad enough, but in the slums by the river-bed there was not even room for carts and horses to pass.

As for the poor labourers and woodcutters and such like, when they could cut no more firewood and there was none to help them, they broke up their own cottages and took the pieces into the city to sell. And what one man could carry was hardly enough to provide him with food for one day.

And it was a shocking thing to see among these scraps of firewood fragments with red lacquer and gold and silver foil still sticking to them. And this because those who could get nothing else broke into the mountain temples and stole the images and utensils and broke them up to sell for kindling. It must be a wretched and degenerate age when such things are done.

Another very sad thing was that those who had children who were very dear to them almost invariably died before them, because they denied themselves to give their sons and daughters what they needed. And so these children would always survive their parents. And there were babies who continued to feed at their mother's breast, not knowing she was already dead.

Now there was a noble recluse of the Jison-in Hall of the Ninnaji temple called Ryūgyō Hō-in and entitled Lord of the Treasury, who out of pity for the endless number of dead arranged for some monks to go round the city and write the syllable "A" on the foreheads of all they found, that they might receive enlightenment and enter Amida's Paradise. And the number that they counted within the city, in the space of four or five months, between the First and Ninth Avenues on the north and south and between Kyōgoku and Shujaku on the east

and west, was at least forty-two thousand three hundred. And when there is added to this those who perished before and after this period, and also those in the river-bed and Shirakawa and Western City quarters, they must have been almost beyond count. And then there were all the other provinces of the Empire. It is said that not long ago in the august age of the Mikado Sutoku-in in the era Chōshō³ there was such a visitation. But of that I know nothing. What I have seen with my own eyes was strange and terrible enough.

Then in the second year of the era Gen-ryaku⁴ there was a great earthquake. And this was no ordinary one. The hills crumbled down and filled the rivers, and the sea surged up and overwhelmed the land. The earth split asunder and water gushed out. The rocks broke off and rolled down into the valleys, while boats at sea staggered in the swell and horses on land could find no sure foothold. What wonder that in the Capital, of all the temples, monasteries, pagodas and mausoleums, there should not be one that remained undamaged. Some crumbled to pieces and some were thrown down, while the dust rose in clouds like smoke around them, and the sound of the falling buildings was like thunder. Those who were in them were crushed at once, while those who ran out did so to find the ground yawning before them. If one has no wings he cannot fly, and unless one is a Dragon he will find it difficult to ride the clouds. For one terror following on another there is nothing equal to an earthquake.

Among those who suffered was the child of a warrior, some six or seven years old. He had made a little hut under the eaves of the earthen wall and was playing there when the whole fell and buried him. And it was very sad to see how his parents cried aloud in their grief as they picked him up all battered and with his eyes protruding from his head. Even a stern samurai at such a time thought it no shame to show signs of his deep feeling. And indeed I think it quite natural.

The worst shocks soon ceased, but the after tremors continued for some time. Every day there were some twenty or thirty that were beyond the ordinary. After the tenth and twentieth day they gradually came at longer intervals, four or five, and then two or three in a day. Then there would be a day and then several without any shock at all, but still these after shocks lasted, it may be three months.

³ A.D. 1182.

⁴ A.D. 1184.

Of the four elements, water, fire and wind are always doing damage, but with the earth this is comparatively rare. It was in the era Saiko,⁵ I think, that there was a great earthquake, and the head of the Great Buddha in the Tōdaiji at Nara fell, which I consider a very sad loss indeed, but it is said to have been not so severe as the one I have described.

On these occasions it is the way of the people to be convinced of the impermanence of all earthly things, and to talk of the evil of attachment to them, and of the impurity of their hearts, but when the months go by and then the years, we do not find them making mention of such views any more.

Thus it seems to me that all the difficulties of life spring from this fleeting evanescent nature of man and his habitation. And in other ways too the opportunities he has of being troubled and annoyed by things connected with his locality and rank are almost infinite.

Suppose he is a person of little account and lives near the mansion of a great man. He may have occasion to rejoice very heartily over something, but he cannot do so openly, and in the same way, if he be in trouble it is quite unthinkable that he should lift up his voice and weep. He must be very circumspect in his deportment and bear himself in a suitably humble manner, and his feelings are like those of a sparrow near a hawk's nest. And if a poor man lives near a wealthy one he is continually ashamed of his ill appearance and has to come and go always with an apologetic air. And when he sees the envious glances of his wife and the servants, and hears the slighting way in which his neighbour refers to him, he is always liable to feel irritable and ill at ease. And if a man has little land round his house he is likely to suffer in a conflagration, while if he lives in an out of the way place it is awkward for travelling and he is very liable to be robbed.

Men of influence are usually greedy of place and power, while those of none are apt to be despised. If you have a lot of property you have many cares, while if you are poor there is always plenty to worry you. If you have servants, you are in their power, and if you compassionate others then that feeling masters you. If you follow the fashions around you, you will have little comfort, and if you do not you will be called crazy. Wherever you go and whatever you do it is hard to find rest for mind and body.

I inherited the estate of my great-grandmother on the father's side, and there I lived for a while. But then as I left home and came down in the world and as there were very many reasons why I wished to live unnoticed, I could not remain where I was, so I built a cottage just suited to my wants. It was only a tenth of the size of my former home and contained only a living-room for myself, for I could not build a proper house. It had rough plastered walls and no gate, and the pillars were of bamboo, so it was really nothing more than a cart-shed. And as it was not far from the river-bed there was some peril from floods as well as anxiety about thieves.

So I went on living in this unsympathetic world amid many difficulties for thirty years, and the various rebuffs that I met left me with a poor opinion of this fleeting life. So when I arrived at the age of fifty I abandoned the world and retired, and since I had no wife or child it was by no means difficult to leave it, neither had I any rank or revenue to be a tie to hold me. And so it is that I have come to spend I know not how many useless years hidden in the mists of Mount Ohara. I am now sixty years old, and this hut in which I shall spend the last remaining years of my dew-like existence is like the shelter that some hunter might build for a night's lodging in the hills, or like the cocoon some old silkworm might spin. If I compare it to the cottage of my middle years it is not a hundredth of the size. Thus as old age draws on my hut has but grown smaller and smaller. It is a cottage of quite a peculiar kind, for it is only ten feet square and less than seven feet high, and as I did not decide to fix it in any definite place I did not choose the site by divination as usual. The walls are of rough plastered earth and the roof is of thatch. All the joints are hinged with metal so that if the situation no longer pleases me I can easily take it down and transport it elsewhere. And this can be done with very little labour, for the whole will only fill two cart-loads, and beyond the small wage of the carters nothing else is needed.

Now hidden deep in the fastnesses of Mount Hino, I have put up eaves projecting on the south side to keep off the sun and a small bamboo verandah beneath them. On the west is the shelf for the offerings of water and flowers to Buddha, and in the middle, against the western wall is a picture of Amida Buddha so arranged that the setting sun shines from between his brows as though he were emitting his ray of light, while

on the doors of his shrine are painted pictures of Fugen and Fudo.⁶ Over the sliding doors on the north side is a little shelf on which stand three or four black leather cases containing some volumes of Japanese poems and music and a book of selections from the Buddhist Sutras. Beside these stand a harp and a lute of the kind called folding harp and jointed lute. On the eastern side is a bundle of fern fronds and a mat of straw on which I sleep at night. In the eastern wall there is a window before which stands my writing-table. A fire-box beside my pillow in which I can make a fire of broken brushwood completes the furniture. To the north of my little hut I have made a tiny garden surrounded by a thin low brushwood fence so that I can grow various kinds of medicinal herbs. Such is the style of my unsubstantial cottage.

As to my surroundings, on the south there is a little basin that I have made of piled-up rocks to receive the water that runs down from a bamboo spout above it, and as the forest trees reach close up to the eaves it is easy enough to get fuel.

The place is called Toyama. It is almost hidden in a tangled growth of evergreens. But though the valley is much overgrown it is open towards the west, so that I can contemplate the scenery and meditate on the enlightenment that comes from the Paradise in that quarter. In the spring I behold the clusters of wistaria shining like the purple clouds on which Amida Buddha comes to welcome his elect. In the summer I hear the cuckoo, and his note reminds me that he will soon guide me over the Hills of Death of which they call him the Warden. In autumn I hear everywhere the shrilling of the Evening Cicada and inquire of him if he is bewailing the vanity of this fleeting life, empty as his own dried-up husk, while in winter the snow as it piles up and melts seems like an allegory of our evil Karma.

If I get tired of repeating the Invocation to Buddha or feel disinclined to read the Sutras, and go to sleep or sit idly, there is none to rebuke me, no companion to make me feel ashamed. I may not have made any special vow of silence, but as I am all alone I am little likely to offend with the tongue, and even without intending to keep the Buddhist Commandments, separated from society it is not easy to break them.

In the morning as I look out at the boats on the Uji River by Okanoya I may steal a phrase from the monk Mansei and compare this fleeting life to the white foam in their wake, and

⁶ The Bodhisattvas Samanta Bhadra and Akshobya.

association may lead me to try a few verses myself in his style. Or in the evening, as I listen to the rustling of the maples in the wind the opening lines of the "Lute Maiden," by the great Chinese poet Po-chu-i, naturally occur to my mind, and my hand strays to the instrument and I play perhaps a piece or two in the style of Minamoto Tsunenobu. And if I am in the mood for music I may play the piece called "Autumn Wind" to the accompaniment of the creaking of the pine-trees outside, or that entitled "Flowing Waters" in harmony with the purling of the stream. I have little skill in verse or music, but then I only play and compose for my own instrument, and not for the ears of other people.

At the foot of the hill there is a little cottage of brushwood where lives the keeper of these hills. And he has a boy who sometimes comes to bear me company, and when time is heavy on my hands we go for a walk. He is sixteen and I am sixty, and though the difference in age is so great, we find plenty of amusement in each other's society.

Sometimes we gather the Lalong grass or the rock-pear or help ourselves to wild potatoes or parsley, or we may go as far as the rice-fields at the foot of our hills and glean a few ears to make an offering to the deities. If the day is fine we may climb up some high peak and look out over the Capital in the distance and enjoy the views of Mt. Kobata, Fushimi, Toba or Hatsu-kashi. Fine scenery has no landlord, so there is nothing to hinder our pleasure.

When I feel in the mood for a longer walk we may go over the hills by Sumiyama past Kasatori and visit the temple of Kwannon of the Thousand Arms at Iwama. Or it may take our fancy to go and worship at the famous temple of Ishiyama by Lake Biwa. Or again, if we go by Awazu, we may stop to say a prayer for the soul of Semi Maru⁷ at his shrine on Ausaka Hill, and from thence may cross the River Tagami and visit the grave of Saru Maru Taiyu.⁸

Then on our way back, according to the season, there will be the cherry-blossoms to pluck and the maple or some sort of berries to gather. And of these some we can offer to the Buddha and some we can eat ourselves.

In the quiet evenings I look out of my window at the moon and think over the friends of other days, and the mournful cry of the monkey often makes me moisten my sleeve with tears. I

⁷ Famous lute-player, tenth century.

⁸ Poet of the same period.

might imagine the cloud of fire-flies to be the fishing fires at Makinoshima, or the rain at dawn to be the patter of the leaves driven by the wind. When I hear the hollow cry of the pheasant that might be mistaken for a father or mother hallooing to their children, as Gyogi Bosatsu's verse has it, or see the mountain deer approach me without any fear, then I understand how remote I am from the world. And I stir up the embers of my smouldering fire, the best friend an old man can find by him when he wakes. The mountains themselves are not at all awesome, though indeed the hooting of the owls is sometimes melancholy enough, but of the beauties of the ever-changing scenery of the hills one never becomes weary. And to one who thinks deeply and has a good store of knowledge such pleasure is indeed inexhaustible.

When I first came to live in this place I thought it would be but for a little space, but five years have already passed. This temporary hut of mine looks old and weather-beaten and on the roof the rotting leaves lie deep, while the moss has grown thick on the plastered walls. By occasional tidings that reach me from the Capital, I learn that the number of distinguished people who have passed away is not small, and as to those of no consequence it must be very great indeed. And in the various fires I wonder how many houses have been burnt.

But in this little impermanent hut of mine all is calm and there is nothing to fear. It may be small, but there is room to sleep at night and to sit down in the day-time, so that for one person there is no inconvenience. The hermit-crab chooses a small shell, and that is because he well knows the needs of his own body. The fishing-eagle chooses a rough beach because he does not want man's competition. Just so am I. If one knows himself and knows what the world is he will merely wish for the quiet and be pleased when he has nothing to grieve about, wanting nothing and caring for nobody.

It is the way of people when they build houses not to build for themselves, but for their wives and family and relations, and to entertain their friends, or it may be their patrons or teachers, or to accommodate their valuables or horses or oxen.

But I have built mine for my own needs and not for other people. And for the good reason that I have neither companion nor dependant, so that if I built it larger who would there be to occupy it? And as to friends, they respect wealth and prefer those who are hospitable to them, but think little of those who

are kindly and honest. The best friends one can have are flowers and moon, strings and pipe. And servants respect those who reward them, and value people for what they get. If you are merely kind and considerate and do not trouble them they will not appreciate it. So the best servant you can have is your own body, and if there is anything to be done, do it yourself. It may be a little troublesome, perhaps, but it is much easier than depending on others and looking to them to do it.

If you have to go anywhere go on your own feet. It may be trying, but not so much as the bother of horses and carriages. Everyone with a body has two servants, his hands and feet, and they will serve his will exactly. And since the mind knows the fatigue of the body it works when it is vigorous and allows it to rest when it is tired. The mind uses the body, but not to excess, and when the body is tired it is not vexed. And to go on foot and do one's own work is the best road to strength and health. For to cause trouble and worry to our fellows is to lay up evil Karma. And why should you use the labour of others ?

Clothes and food are just the same. Garments woven from wistaria-vines, and bed-clothes of hemp, covering the body with what comes nearest to hand, and sustaining one's life with the berries and fruits that grow on the hills and plains, that is best. If you do not go into society, you need not be ashamed of your appearance, and if your food is scanty it will have the better relish. I do not say these things from envy of rich people, but only from comparison of my early days with the life I live now.

Since I forsook the world and broke off all its ties, I have felt neither fear nor resentment. I commit my life to fate without special wish to live or desire to die. Like a drifting cloud I rely on none and have no attachments. My only luxury is a sound sleep and all I look forward to is the beauty of the changing seasons.

Now the Three Phenomenal Worlds, the World of Desire, the World of Form, and the World of No-Form, are entirely of the mind. If the mind is not at rest, horses and oxen and the Seven Precious Things and Palaces and Pavilions are of no use. With this lonely cottage of mine, this hut of one room, I am quite content. If I go out to the Capital I may feel shame at looking like a mendicant priest, but when I come back home here I feel compassion for those who are still bound by the attraction of earthly things. If any doubt me let them consider

the fish. They do not get tired of the water ; but if you are not a fish you cannot understand their feelings.⁹ Birds too love the woods, but unless you are yourself a bird you cannot know how they feel. It is just so with the life of a hermit : How can you understand unless you experience it ?

Now the moon of my life has reached its last phase and my remaining years draw near to their close. When I soon approach the Three Ways of Hereafter what shall I have to regret ? The Law of Buddha teaches that we should shun all clinging to the world of phenomena, so that the affection I have for this thatched hut is in some sort a sin, and my attachment to this solitary life may be a hindrance to enlightenment. Thus I have been babbling, it may be, of useless pleasures, and spending my precious hours in vain.

In the still hours of the dawn I think of these things, and to myself I put these questions : " Thus to forsake the world and dwell in the woods, has it been to discipline my mind and practise the Law of Buddha or not ? Have I put on the form of a recluse while yet my heart has remained impure ? Is my dwelling but a poor imitation of that of the Saint Vimalakirrti while my merit is not even equal to that of Sudhipanthaka the most stupid of the followers of Buddha ? Is this poverty of mine but the retribution for the offences of a past existence, and do the desires of an impure heart still arise to hinder my enlightenment ? And in my heart there is no answer. The most I can do is to murmur two or three times a perchance unavailing invocation to Buddha."

The last day of the third month of the second year of the era Kenryaku,¹⁰ By me the Sramana Ren-in in my hut on Toyama Hill.

Sad am I at heart
When the moon's bright silver orb
Sinks behind the hill.
But how blest 'twill be to see
Amida's perpetual light.

⁹ Looks like an echo of the well-known passage in Chuang-tz.
¹⁰ A.D. 1212.

THE YOUNG TATTOOER¹

IT was when men were still blessed with the noble virtue of "simple-mindedness," and the battle of life was far less severe than it is nowadays. It was when the world at large was so easy-going that *ochabōzu*² and buffoons could enjoy a fair income, whose profession it was to crack innocent jokes, in order that the calm brows of daimyos and of rich young "bloods" might not cloud with thought, and that the merry laughter of palace-maids and *oiran*³ might not cease to tinkle. On the stage, and in the fiction, of those days, all beautiful persons were strong and shapely, and all ill-favoured ones weak and ungainly. Everybody strove to beautify himself, until at last, in order to achieve this object, each and all indulged in having their bodies pricked and stained with pigments. Brilliant colours and bold lines danced all over their precious epidermis.

Gay visitors to the "Nightless City" chose splendidly tattooed palanquin-bearers to carry them there: and the frail fair of Yoshiwara and Tatsumi⁴ fell in love with men who had picturesque or unique designs tattooed over them. Merchants and occasionally even samurai, not to speak of gamblers and firemen, had their bodies illustrated in this indelible fashion. In a tattoo exhibition occasionally held at Ryogoku, those who attended stripped themselves to show off and to invite criticism.

¹ I have considerably revised the translation of this story—[Editor].

² *Ochabōzu* or literally "tea-priests" were a sort of court-jesters who served tea and amused by witticisms, jokes, japes and so on, and had their heads shaved like Buddhist priests.

³ *Oiran*—the licensed courtesans of the feudal days. Most of them, unlike the prostitutes of the present day, were highly educated girls well versed in etiquette and in all the graceful accomplishments, such as playing the *koto* or Japanese zither, flower-arrangement, tea-ceremonies, and even the composing of *waka* or Japanese versicles of thirty-one syllables. They occupied a rather higher social standing than the geisha of to-day in that somewhat resembling the Greek *hetairai*; so samurai and even daimyos did not disdain to patronise them.

⁴ The present Susaki in the Fukagawa quarter.

There was a young tattooer named Seikichi renowned for his great skill in the art. He was the equal, people said, of any of the greatest masters of needle-painting ; and the skin of scores of people had been used as canvases for his brush. A large proportion of men who won high praise for the excellent tattooings upon their persons at tattoo exhibitions had been eager victims of his skilled though painful needle. Daruma Kin was said to have a unique proficiency for faint tattooing, and Karakusa Gonta was highly esteemed for his vermillion-tattooing ; whilst Seikichi was well known for his original designs and admirable colouring.

Seikichi who had once earned his living as a *genre*-painter of the Toyokuni school still preserved an artistic conscience and a delicate sensibility worthy of a painter even after he had degenerated into a mere tattooer. Nobody could obtain his services but those who had a skin and physique magnificent enough to tempt him. Even supposing someone had the good fortune to induce the proud tattooer to adorn his skin, he had yet not only to leave design and cost entirely to the artist's taste and discretion, but also had to endure the almost intolerable pain of his needles for sometimes as long as a month or two. There were in this young tattooer's mind a morbid pleasure and a cherished desire unsuspected by even his most intimate friends. When he pricked a man's body with his needles, his client would generally groan under the severe pain of the flesh swelling with scarlet blood ; and strange to say, the louder the groaning of the poor fellow, the profounder was the pleasure, the keener the delight, Seikichi experienced. He was particularly fond of executing vermillion and faint tattooing which were considered the most painful methods. When a man had been stippled all over with five or six hundred needles in a day and had taken a hot water bath to make the colours stand out more brilliantly, he would lie prostrate at Seikichi's feet all but dead, quite unable to stir for hours. But the artist would cast a look of cold indifference on him. "I suppose you are enduring the tortures of the damned ?" he would ask his unhappy victim.

When a nervous man or a coward cried out loudly, as though already suffering the agonies of death, distorting his mouth and gnashing his teeth, Seikichi would say : " You are a Yedo man, arent you ? Be brave, then ! Why, my needles haven't even begun to hurt yet ! You are crying too soon ! "

Whereupon he steadily tattooed on, casting a glance now and then at the subject's pained face.

When, on the other hand, a man of great endurance mustered up courage and endured, without even knitting his eyebrows, he would say with a sarcastic smile: "H'm! What a strong-willed man! But wait a little! You'll get what is coming to you, for it will soon ache and ache until even your iron strength and stubbornness will have to give way."

His cherished desire was to tattoo his "soul" on the fair skin of some supremely beautiful and perfectly shaped woman. He had many ideas about this peerless woman's features and physique. The mere fact that a woman had a lovely face and a skin of fine, satiny-smooth texture would not content him. He had narrowly scanned all the celebrated beauties in the gay quarters of Yedo, but none of them satisfied his critical eye. With a vivid picture of his ideal woman's figure and features constantly torturing his imagination, he had sought her longingly and indefatigably for three or four years but hitherto wholly in vain; nevertheless, he had not yet abandoned his quest—the Quest of the Perfect Woman!

One summer evening in the fourth year of his persistent search, he happened to pass in front of the Hirasei, a restaurant in Fukagawa. He suddenly glimpsed a woman's snow-white foot peeping out from under the blind of a palanquin waiting at the gate. His quick artist's eye instantly recognised in the foot⁵ a complicated expression, such as one might discern in a human face. The foot was to him a priceless jewel of flesh. How symmetrical the delicate little toes! The nails were as pink as shells gathered in the beach of Enoshima: the heel rounded and dainty in its curves as a pearl; the skin as fair and lustrous as if the foot were incessantly laved by crystal water running down from some pure spring mountain. This foot was surely destined in future, as it were, to grow fat from the wine-press of her lovers' blood and to tread on their corpses. The

⁵ In the period of which this story treats (about the middle of the nineteenth century) beautiful feet were considered one of the important personal qualifications of a Yedo geisha. A woman, however, comely of visage, if her feet were ugly, was not esteemed. Geisha, therefore, took as great pains in beautifying the skin of their feet as they did in the make-up of their faces. And even in the dead of winter they never wore socks, but were proud of displaying the beauty of their naked feet. This will be recalled by anyone who has seen some *genre-pictures* by Toyokuni and Sadakuni, representing the women of those days.

possessor of this foot might probably be the woman of women, the woman of his dreams, whom he had been seeking—thus far vainly—during all these years past. The enthusiastic artist, really carried away by his excitement and admiration, yet outwardly controlling his emotion, pursued the palanquin in the eager hope of catching a glimpse of the beauty's face—for he had not the least doubt that she was a beauty, and a superb one at that, to be the possessor of such a foot!—but, to his great disappointment, before he had followed more than three *chō* on her track, he had lost sight of the palanquin.

By the close of the same year, Seikichi's longing to see the woman had developed into a mania—almost, a passionate love of her beauty, utterly peerless, beyond all imagination. Fortune, perchance having compassion on so ardent, so persevering a pursuer of the Ideal, blessed him one morning in the late spring of the fifth year of the Quest. Standing on the bamboo verandah of his temporary residence at *Saga-chō*, *Fukagawa*, he was looking, with a tooth-brush between his teeth, at some pots of *omoto* or *Rhodea japonica*. At this moment there were sounds of someone drawing near the garden-gate; and the next moment from beyond the hedge a strange girl made her appearance.

She was a messenger from a *geisha* at *Tatsumi* whom he patronised. "Sir, my sister asks you to paint some picture or other on the lining of this *haori*."

As she spoke, the girl opened a yellow *furoshiki*⁶ and produced a letter from the singer, and the *haori* wrapped in beautiful thick paper painted with a portrait of *Tojaku*, the actor. In the letter the singer politely repeated her earnest request concerning the *haori*; and a postscript ran: "As the bearer of this letter and parcel hopes to begin, at no distant date, her career as a singing-girl, and will professionally be my younger sister, I hope and wish that you will encourage her by sending for her occasionally—this, of course, without prejudice to the patronage with which you have hitherto graciously favoured me."

"My girl, I see you are a stranger to me. You've only recently come to *Tatsumi*, haven't you?" As he spoke the artist began to scrutinise the girl's countenance most critically. She seemed to be only about sixteen years of age; but her features

⁶ A square piece of cloth of various sizes and colours, used to wrap up articles to be carried from one place to another.

were weirdly perfect as those of a fair woman who had spent many years in a pleasure-quarter and had fascinated scores of men. Her beauty was such as might have emanated from the numerous dreams of many handsome men and lovely women who had lived and died in the Capital, whither the crimes and riches of all Japan were sure ultimately to find their way. "You returned home by palanquin from the Hissei somewhere around June of last year, didn't you?"

So questioning Seikichi made her sit on the edge of the verandah and minutely observed her delicate naked feet resting on beautiful clogs.

"Ah, yes. As my father was still alive in those days, I often visited that restaurant," she answered, smiling at the queer question.

"In that case 'tis you I've been longing for and waiting, awaiting and longing for during five exhausting years. This is, indeed, the very first time I've had the extreme good luck to see your face, yet I remember well I saw your foot. As I have something I want to show you, please come upstairs, and make yourself at home and stay as long as you like."

Seizing the hand of the girl, who was about to take her leave, he made her come upstairs and into the second-story parlour commanding a fine view of the Sumida River. Then he produced two large picture-scrolls, and unrolled one of them before her.

It was a representation of T'aki, the infamous consort of the Emperor Chow, a tyrant of ancient China. Upon the head of the beautiful woman was flauntingly placed a gold crown set with jade and coral; she was leaning against the hand-rail, the skirts of her brocaded silk robe falling in graceful folds on the steps. Holding up a chalice of some rich and sparkling wine in her right hand, with her lips parted in an exquisite smile which betrayed the fact that her whole being was steeped in sensuous enjoyment of her victim's mental and physical sufferings, this incarnation of degenerate cruelty was greedily, avariciously, gazing at and gloating over a man in the prime of manhood, who was about to be executed to her wanton caprice and to her intense voluptuous delight in inflicting and witnessing pain and the taking of life. With his limbs fastened brutally to copper pillars, the hapless victim patiently, nay, doggedly, with closed eyes and drooping head, awaited the fatal order, which the human tigress purposely delayed to give. The painting was

quite free from the vulgarity that one often finds in this kind of composition ; and it was so carefully wrought that the sight of it inspired one with terror.

The young girl for some while gazed at the weird design with great interest, mingled with fear, apprehension, almost with disgust. Then involuntarily, the pupils of her eyes sparkled and her lips trembled. What was stranger, her face began by degrees to look more and more like Queen T'aki's. There the girl found her hidden real "Self," her "Ego."

"My girl, your mind is represented in this picture," said Seikichi, with a pleasant smile, looking into her face.

"Why do you show me such a terrible thing as this, sir ?" she asked, raising her pale forehead.

"The woman in this picture is really yourself. Her blood must be running in your veins," said he, while unrolling the other scroll.

Mark the title of the *makimono*—"Love's Victims." In the middle distance was a fair young woman standing with her back against the trunk of a cherry-tree and gazing at the corpses of scores and scores of men who had fallen dead one upon another at her feet. Clusters of little birds flew about her, pouring out triumphal songs ; and irresistible pride and joy sparkled in her eyes. Was this a battlefield after a sanguinary fight ? Or a garden in spring ? Looking at the scroll, the young girl felt as if she had searched out something lying hidden at the bottom of her mind.

"This represents your future. The men lying about here are all to sacrifice their lives for your sake," said Seikichi, pointing at the woman in the picture who was the counterpart of the girl.

"For Heaven's sake, sir, put away that *makimono* quickly," As if trying to avoid a dreadful temptation, she turned away her eyes and laid herself on the matting, face downward. But soon her lips parted again, trembling convulsively :

"Sir, I will confess. As you guess, I do have a mind like that of the woman in this picture—but forgive me and be so kind as to put the *makimono* away."

"Don't be such a coward ; but look at the design more attentively. Why, you will soon cease to be afraid of it," said the tattooer, the usual sarcastic smile upon his face.

The girl, however, would not readily look up ; but remained in the same position, her face buried in her long, flowing sleeves.

"Sir, allow me to return home as I am afraid of your presence," she repeated this entreaty time and again.

"Oh, you must stay longer. I mean to make a great beauty of you."

With these words, he drew close to the girl. He had a vial of chloroform concealed in his breast which he had some time previously obtained from a physician of the Duteh school.

The sunlight shot back by the river made the eight-mat parlour as bright as if it were ablaze. The reflected rays drew trembling golden wavy stripes on the face of the innocently sleeping girl and on the paper of the *shōji*. Seikichi who had shut himself in and was ready with the instruments of tattooing could do nothing for a while but sit in a trance. Now for the first time he was able to appreciate to the utmost the fascination, the charm, of this girl's features. He fancied that he could sit quietly in this room and look at her unconscious face even for years without feeling a whit bored or weary. Just as the inhabitants of ancient Memphis embellished the solemn aspect of Nature in Egypt with pyramids and sphinxes, so did Seikichi now intend to beautify the skin of a pure girl with his love. Presently he laid the point of a painting-brush held in his left hand on the girl's back, and pricked the pigment with needles held in his right hand. The young tattooer's soul dissolved in the pigment and soaked into the skin. The drops of the Loochoo vermillion mixed in spirits were so many drops of his life-blood. There he saw the colour of his soul.

Meanwhile high noon had passed and the tranquil spring day was coming to a close; yet Seikichi's hand did not rest in the least nor was the girl's sleep broken. Her people, alarmed at her disappearance, had sent a man to the tattooer's in search of her; but the latter had sent him off by asserting that she had gone back long before.

Presently the moon hung above the mansion of the Lord of Tosa on the opposite bank, and the dreamy light poured into the parlours of the houses on both banks, yet the tattooing was not even half finished, and Seikichi was intently trimming the candle.

It was no easy task for him even to inject a single drop of pigment. Each time he thrust in or drew out a needle, he heaved a sigh and felt as if his heart were being stabbed. The maculae left by his needles gradually assumed the shape of a

gigantic spider ; and when the eastern skies were streaked by the approach of a glorious dawn, this mystic daemonic creature had reached out eight long claws and had extended itself all over the girl's back.

By the time the stillness of the early morn had been broken by the rattle-tattle of the sculls of boats rowing up and down the river, "on their lawful occasions," and the tiles of the houses at Nakazu, Hakozaki and Reiganjima gleamed in the haze which grew thinner about the tops of the white sails bellying with the morning breeze, the diligent artist had put down his brush and was looking at the monstrous spider he had just created. He had exhausted almost all his life and art on tattoo. Therefore, having achieved the Quest, and fulfilled the task which he had set himself to do, his mind became a blank.

Neither the tattooer nor the girl stirred at all for quite an appreciable while ; then a low, hoarse voice was heard quavering through the room :

" My girl, I have pricked my soul into this tattoo in order to make you a truly, a perfectly beautiful woman. No other woman in Japan can any longer vie with you in beauty or attraction. You are now rid of the timid heart you have had. All men are destined to be your victims."

Whether the girl's ear caught these words or not, a faint groan came to her lips. She seemed by degrees to recover her senses. As she breathed heavily, moving her shoulders in order to get deeper breaths, the claws of the tattooed spider moved as if they were alive.

" You must be in great pain. You are tightly embraced by a spider."

At these words the girl slightly opened far-off eyes. But her pupils gradually increased in brightness, as does the moon at even, and at last threw their light on Seikichi's face.

" Sir, please let me see the picture on my back. I can well imagine how beautiful I have become—why, you have given me your life."

Her words sounded like a dream, but there was a dominant note in her tones.

" But you must now go to the bathroom to improve the colours. It is painful, but endure yet a little," Seikichi whispered into her ear in kind tones.

" If I am to become beautiful, I will endure any pain," she

forced a smile, enduring bravely and patiently the intense torture caused by the tattoo.

"Oh, what pain the hot water gives me ! Sir, for Heaven's sake leave me, go upstairs and wait for me there. I dislike to be seen in the exposure of an agony so acute as this." She, who had just had her bath but had not yet wiped her body, thrust away Seikichi's helping hands ; and overwhelmed by the severe pain, threw herself down on the planks and groaned as if she had a nightmare. The dishevelled hair shrouding her face gave her a ghostly appearance. A mirror standing behind her reflected the pink soles of her snow-white feet.

Seikichi was greatly surprised at the girl's attitude, so different from the timidity of bearing which had characterised her the day before ; but yielding to her peremptory wish, he went upstairs and waited for her. After a lapse of about an hour, she slowly ascended to him. She had made her toilet, and the raven-black hair fresh from washing was flowing over the shoulders.

She leaned on the railing, and looked up at the hazy skies with a bright countenance which betrayed not even a shadow of pain.

"Now, you queen among women, I'll give you this picture. You can now go home with it," said the tattooer, offering her one of the scrolls.

"Sir, just as you foretold, I've shaken off the timid heart I've hitherto had.—Ha ! I see you have become the first of all my victims ! "

As she said this her pupils glared like swords. The picture of "Love's Victims" was reflected in her eyes, and triumphal songs were humming in her ears.

"Let me see the tattoo once again before you go," begged Seikichi. The girl nodded in silence and stript her back. At this moment the morning sun shone brightly on the tattoo, and her back glistened brilliantly.



MOROCCO

"THE Merchant's Daughter and the Sultan's Son" is probably of Berber origin, though John Rodker, in his notes on *The Tales of Fez* considers: "It would be impossible to determine whether pure Berber folklore has influenced that of Fez, or vice versa."¹ Such tales as this have also strong traces of Arabic influence (in which language it was written). The present story is taken from *Contes Fasis*, by M. E. Dermenghem, and M. Mohammed el Fasi, who had heard them told by his grandmother. Tales such as these are told in the evening, nearly always by women.²

¹ See pp. 318-19, *Eastern Love*, vol. iii.

² See p. 285, *Eastern Love*, vol. i.





THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER AND THE SULTAN'S SON

THERE was and there was—and Allah was in every place—no land, no region, is empty of Him—and there was basil and lilies in the lap of the Prophet (upon whom the benediction and the peace of God !) and there was once a rich merchant who had a daughter called Āishah, as beautiful as the moon. Glory to God who created and modelled a creature so very fair !

As she was taking the air one evening on the terrace, her dādā¹ climbed up to her with a bowl of thin soup, and while she was drinking it the girl let one of the little balls of paste fall on her breast, and afterwards picked it up and put it in her mouth.

The Sultan's son, who was walking on the neighbouring terrace, saw this and said : " O Lalla, you who grow basil, you who water a pot of basil on the terrace, tell me, I pray you, how many leaves there are in your basil-plant ! " " O son of the Sultan," she answered, " O you who hold all lands, O learned Lord, O sage who reads in the books of Allah tell me how many

¹ Black nurse.

fish there are in the water, stars in the sky, and stops in the Koran ! ” “ Be quiet, greedy ! ” he mocked. “ You took up the ball of the thin soup from your breast and ate it.”

The young girl came down from the terrace in a very bad humour, and asked her dādā to take her to Moulay Idris for a little distraction. As they went on their way, she saw the Sultan’s son again, sitting at the stall of a fruit-merchant and eating a pomegranate. A seed from this pomegranate fell to the earth between his slippers, and he picked it up and ate it. The girl was delighted to have surprised this gesture in him, and returned home in the best of humours.

Early next morning she went up on to her terrace to water her pot of basil, as was her custom, and to work at her embroidery. Thus it happened that the same dialogue took place as on the previous day. “ O Lalla, you who grow the basil, how many leaves are there in your plant ? ” “ O son of the Sultan, O you who hold all lands, O learned Lord, O sage who reads in the book of Allah, tell me how many fish there are in the water, stars in the sky, and stops in the Koran ! ” “ Be gone, greedy ! You took up the ball of the thin soup from your breast and ate it.” But this time she replied in triumph : “ Be gone, greedy ! You took up the pomegranate seed which had fallen in the mud between your slippers and ate it.”

It was the prince’s turn to grow angry and to depart. He made his way to the Jews’ quarter, to a certain one whose clothes he purchased. Disguised as a little wandering Jewish pedlar, covered with a black bonnet, wearing black slippers, and bearing a tray full of merchandise for women, he walked through the streets crying his goods until he came to the dwelling of Lalla Āishah imitating the voice of a little Jewish pedlar, he cried : “ Scents and mirrors ! Kerchiefs and combs and rings ! ” and this he did so well that the girl took him for a true son of Israel, and sent her dādā out to him to buy some perfume. Seeing that his ruse had succeeded, the disguised prince said to the negress : “ Choose out and take all that you wish.” And, when she asked the price : “ I only require one kiss of your mistress’s cheek,” he said. The girl consented and allowed herself to be kissed on the cheek by this filthy pedlar, who straightway departed, glorying in his success.

Next morning, at the first hour, he climbed up on to the terrace, and saw the daughter of the merchant watering her basil. “ O Lallah, you who grow basil,” he said, “ tell me how

many leaves it has!" "O Sultan's son," she replied, "O learned Lord and the like, tell me how many fish there are in the water, stars in the sky, and stops in the Koran!" "Be gone, greedy! You took up the ball of the thin soup from your breast and ate it." "Be gone, greedy! You took up the pomegranate seed which had fallen in the mud between your slippers and ate it." It was now the prince's turn to triumph, and he said: "I was the Jew, I walked along the streets, and I had my will of the cheek of the merchant's daughter."

When she heard these words, Lalla Aishah was covered with confusion and quickly descended from the terrace. "Dādā," she said, "I wish to go at once to see my aunt. Will you come with me?" "Willingly," said the dādā. Lalla Aishah told her aunt all that had happened and begged her to colour her black, that she might seem in everything a slave. As soon as she had been turned into a negress, she had her aunt lead her to the House of the Converted Jew and sell her. The merchant found the young girl so beautiful that he offered her to the Sultan's son, and the latter had her sent to his dwelling. But before she departed. Lalla Aishah got ready a razor, a cucumber, some red ochre, a mirror and a violent narcotic. She caused the prince to drink of this drug and, when he was asleep, shaved off his beard and moustache, painted him like a woman, hung the mirror round his neck, thrust the cucumber up his bottom, and then escaped. Returning to her aunt's house, she carefully washed and had already become quite white again, when the Sultan's son awoke to find himself in a very humiliating position.

After the usual dialogue had taken place between the two upon the following morning from terrace to terrace, that is, between the merchant's daughter and the prince who was shaved as close as a woman, the girl was able to finish it in triumph, crying: "I was a slave, I went to the House of the Converted Jew; then I played several splendid tricks on the Sultan's son." Furious, humiliated and vexed to the bottom of his heart, the Sultan's son swore to marry this young obstinate, and to compel her to confess that man is more subtle than woman. He asked for her hand in marriage, and her father consented. As soon as he had her in his possession he placed her in an underground granary, giving her very coarse clothes and, for sole nourishment, a daily barley loaf and a jar of water from the oued. But the cunning girl dug a subterranean tunnel between the granary and her parents' house; thus she was able to go home

every day to eat, and had only to take care to be back in her prison at the time when her husband came with her daily ration. Stretching out the black bread and the jar, he would say : " O Lalla Āishah, O sad dweller in this granary, which is the more subtle, man or woman ? " " Woman, my Lord," she would always answer, and he never could make her alter her reply.

The days passed thus, and the Sultan died, and his son succeeded him. At the beginning of Spring he decided to spend certain days in the country, as was his custom, and therefore came to visit his wife in the granary. " In eight days," he said, " I shall go to Sūr at five o'clock in the morning and spend a fortnight there." " For your health, Lord ! " answered the young woman, " and may it bring you happiness." She hastened along the tunnel to her father's house, and begged him to make preparations even more magnificent than those of the Sultan at Sūr, and told him that she wished to be installed in that place an hour before her husband could himself arrive.

On the night before his departure the Sultan came to say farewell to his wife, and at dawn the next day he set out upon his journey. When he came to Sūr, he found velvet tents, far handsomer than his own, set up there, and at the door of one of these tents he saw a young slave dressed with marvellous richness. He asked about in his astonishment, and learned that a very beautiful young woman had come earlier that same morning to settle down in that place for a few days. Being filled with curiosity, he begged the slave to ask her mistress if she would receive him. She sent back answer that she would not see him until he had spent three days in the city as a scavenger of dung.

The Sultan consented, and returned in three days, all dirty and covered with dung. Water was heated for him, and he was washed, and afterwards dressed in sumptuous clothing. Finally and at length he went below the tent of the mysterious unknown. " I will not speak to you," said Lalla Āishah, " until you have a marriage contract made for us, and give me your sabre and its belt for dowry." Moved by the sweetness of the voice in which this demand was made, the Sultan consented, and then, losing all sense of time, passed twenty whole days with his loved one without recognising her. On the twentieth day they sent to tell him that if he did not return a revolution would break out in the City ; therefore he left his wife who had by this time become pregnant.

When the Sultan reached home, Lalla Āishah was already back in her granary. The first thing he did was to go and visit her, being sure that she would now acknowledge the superiority of masculine cunning. He said : " I have just passed twenty days of delight in the country with a woman who has eyes like yours, hands like yours, a face like yours, and a voice like yours." " For your health, Lord ! " she answered simply. " Your good fortune is a great good fortune, and happiness ceases not to fall upon you. May joy and pleasure abide in your dwelling ! "

After this all went on as before.

In the fifth month of her pregnancy, Lalla Āishah began to make preparations for the birth of her child. At the end of the ninth month she brought forth a son, and called him Sūr.

Next spring the Sultan went again to the country, choosing this time to pitch his tents at a place called Dūr. Lalla Āishah had preceded him, and all went between them as before. She insisted that the Sultan should spend three days as a wandering sweet-seller, and demanded his silver prayer-case with its silken cord as dowry. In the course of time she bore a second son, whom she called Dūr.

In the third year matters fell out precisely in the same way, but this time at el-Kusūr. The Sultan had to spend three days cleaning the tent where his loved one's horse was tethered, and to give his ring as dowry. This time the child was a daughter, and her mother called her Lalla Hamamet el-Kusūr, the Dove of the Palaces.

Each time her husband returned to the granary, Lalla Āishah refused to admit the superiority of men over women in matters of ingenuity. Therefore the Sultan ended by feeling that he had had enough of so headstrong and proud a wife, and told her that he intended to take another favourite. " I love and honour her ! " she answered imperturbably. " May Allah consolidate your reign, and cause you triumph ! When will they get the chamber ready for your new bride ? " " On such a day," he answered. " I wish you luck," she said.

When the time came, she put her three children into their most beautiful clothes. Then she gave Sūr a pair of scissors, Dūr a small knife, and young Hamamet el-Kusūr a little watering-can. Finally she had the children introduced into the palace and bade them cut and wet all that the negresses were preparing. The children carried out their task to a marvel, and thoroughly spoilt all the preparations. When the servants would have

driven them forth, they cried : " This house is the house of our father, and yet these sons of dogs would drive us from it ! " And when the servants tried to catch them and put them to the door by force, they called out as loudly as they possibly could : " Come, my brother Sûr ! Come, my brother Dûr ! Come, my sister Lalla Hamamet el-Kusûr ! Look, look, we can see Uncle Packet flying up to heaven ! " And while the people of the house lifted their eyes to see Uncle Packet, the three little ones escaped.

Thus it was that the Sultan learnt that these were his own children. The whole tale was made clear to him, and he had to acknowledge that woman is much more cunning than man. He sent back the girl he was about to marry, and it was in honour of Lalla Aîshah the merchant's daughter that the festival preparation went forward.

PERSIA

PERSIAN literature may be said to begin with Darius, Professor Levy tells us in his admirable little book on the subject.¹ Some of the world's loveliest poetry has emanated from that country, reaching a zenith during the Abbasid Caliphate.² The Homer of Persia was Firdawsi,³ and his masterpiece the *Shah-Náma*. An epic of history of the annals and achievements of the early Persian Kings, which took the poet thirty-five years to write and was completed in the eleventh century. Like most heroic poems it abounds in a mixture of both imaginative and true history.

When the work was completed the poet was bitter because the Sultan Mahmúd gave niggardly recognition to his work, and as a result Firdawsi wrote a stinging satire as a preface. The Sultan on reading the preface was consumed with anger. What happened is one of the dramatic stories of Persian literature, and an account which has been recognised as true is recorded in Browne's great *Literary History of Persia*,⁴ which I give here.

"Now Sultan Mahmúd," continues the author of the *Chahár Maqála*,⁵ "was a zealot, and he listened to these imputations and caught hold of them, and, to be brief, only twenty thousand dirhams were paid to Hakím Firdawsi. He was bitterly disappointed, went to the bath, and, on coming out, bought a drink of sherbet, and divided the money between the bath-man and the sherbet-seller. Knowing, however, Mahmúd's severity, he fled from Ghazna by night, and alighted in Herát at the shop of Azraqí's father, Isma'il the bookseller (*warráq*), where he remained in hiding for six months, until Mahmúd's messengers had visited Tús, and had turned back thence, when Firdawsi, feeling secure, set out from Herát for Tús, taking the *Sháhnáma* with him. Thence he came to Tabaristán to the Ispahbad Shahriyár b. Shirwin of the House of Báwand, who was King there; and this is a noble House which traces its descent from Yazdigird, the son of Shahriyár.

"Then Firdawsi wrote a satire on Sultan Madmúd in the Preface, from which he read a hundred couplets to Shír-zád, saying, 'I will dedicate this *Sháhnáma* to thee instead of to Sultán Mahmúd, since this book deals wholly with the legends and deeds of thy forbears'.

¹ Levy, Reuben, *Persian Literature*, an introduction, 1923.

² 750-1258.

³ Firdawsi was his pseudonym, his real name being Abu'l Qásim Hasan.

⁴ Vol. ii., p. 195, *et seq.*

⁵ Nidhami-i-Arudi of Samarquand, the author of *The Four Discourses*.

The Ispahbad treated him with honour and showed him many kindnesses, and said: 'Mahmúd had no right knowledge of this matter, but was induced to act as he did by others, who did not submit your book to him under proper conditions, and who misrepresented you. Moreover you are a Shi'ite, and naught will befall him who loves the Family of the Prophet which did not befall them. Mahmúd is my liege lord: let the *Sháhnáma* stand in his name, and give me the satire which you have written on him, that I may expunge it, and bestow on thee some little recompense; and Mahmúd will surely summon thee and seek to satisfy thee fully. Do not, then, throw away the labour spent on such a book.' And next day he sent Firdawsi one hundred thousand dirhams, saying: 'I will buy each couplet of the satire on the Sultan at a thousand dirhams; give me those hundred couplets and rest satisfied therewith.'

"In the year A.H. 514," (A.D. 1120-21), continues Nidhámí of Samarcand, "when I was in Níshápúr, I heard the Amír Mu'izzí say that he had heard the Amír 'Abdu'r-Razzáq of Tús relate as follows: 'Mahmúd was once in India, returning thence towards Ghazna. It chanced that on his way was a rebellious chief possessed of a strong fortress, and next day Mahmúd encamped at its gates, and despatched an ambassador to him, bidding him come before him on the morrow to do homage and pay his respects at the Court, when he should receive a robe of honour and return to his place. Next day Mahmúd rode out with the Prime Minister on his right hand, for the ambassador had turned back and was coming to meet the King. "I wonder," said the latter to the Minister, "what reply he will have given?" The Minister answered: "'And should the reply with my wish not accord, then Afrásiyáb's field, and the mace, and the sword!'"

"'Whose verse,' inquired Mahmúd, 'is that? For he must have the heart of a man.' 'Poor Abu'l-Qasim Firdawsi composed it,' answered the Minister, 'he who for five-and-twenty years laboured to complete such a work, and reaped from it no advantage.' 'You speak well,' said Mahmúd; 'I deeply regret that this noble man was disappointed by me. Remind me at Ghazna to send him something.'

"So when the Sultan returned to Ghazna, the Minister reminded him; and Mahmúd ordered that sixty thousand dínárs' worth of indigo should be given to Firdawsi, and that this indigo should be carried to Tús on the King's own camels, and that apologies should be tendered to Firdawsi. For years the Minister had been working for this, and at length he had achieved his work; so now he caused the camels to be loaded, and the indigo safely reached Tábarán. But even as the camels entered the Rúdbár Gate, the corpse of Firdawsi was borne forth from the Gate of Razán. Now, at that time, there was in Tábarán a preacher, whose fanaticism was such that he declared that he would not suffer Firdawsi's body to be

buried in the Musulmán Cemetery, because he was a Ráfidí ; and nothing that men could say would serve to move him. Now outside the gate there was a garden belonging to Firdawṣí, and there they buried him, and there he lies to this day. And I visited his tomb in the year A.H. 510 (A.D. 1116-17)."

The episode which I have chosen is the most celebrated, being the tragic story of the hero Rustum and his son Sohráb, which has been made famous by Matthew Arnold's poem. The version given here by James Atkinson is in both prose and verse.

"The Kazi of Emessa," the other example from Persia, is typical of its kind and probably Arabic in origin. Such stories are, as Professor Levy tells us,⁶ mostly in the vein of romances whereby the hero passes through many dangers to finally live happily ever after. Or they have a strong moral code. Their main purpose, when probably told by a wandering litterateur, was to entertain.

⁶ See his introduction to *The Three Dervishes and Other Tales and Legends*, 1923.





THE STORY OF SOHRÁB

Now further mark the searchless ways of Heaven,
Father and son to mortal combat driven !
Alas ! the tale of sorrow must be told,
The tale of tears, derived from minstrel old.

FIRDAWSI relates that Rustem, being on a hunting excursion in the neighbourhood of Túrán, killed an onager, or wild ass,¹ which he roasted in the forest ; and having allayed his hunger, went to sleep, leaving his horse, Rakush, at liberty to graze. In the meantime a band of Tartar wanderers appeared, and seeing so fine an animal astray, succeeded in securing him with their kamunds or nooses, and conveyed him home. When Rustem awoke from sleep he missed his favourite steed, and felt convinced from the surrounding traces of his footsteps that he had been captured and carried away. Accordingly he proceeded towards Samengán, a small principality on the borders of Túrán, and his approach being announced to the king, his

¹ Hunting the Gor, or wild ass, appears to have been a favourite sport in Persia. Bahram the Sixth was surnamed Gor, in consequence of his being peculiarly devoted to the chase of this animal, and which at last cost him his life.

majesty went on foot to receive him with due respect and consideration. Rustom, however, was in great wrath, and haughtily told the king that his horse had been stolen from him in his dominions, and that he had traced his footsteps to Samengán. The king begged that he would not be angry, but become his guest, and he would immediately order a search for the missing horse. Rustom was appeased by this conciliatory address, and readily accepted the proffered hospitality. Having in the first place despatched his people in quest of Rakush, the king of Samengán prepared a magnificent feast for the entertainment of his illustrious guest, at which wine and music and dancing contributed their several charms. Rustom was delighted with the welcome he received ; and when the hour of repose arrived, he was accommodated with a couch suitably provided and decorated. Soon after he had fallen asleep, he was awakened by a beautiful vision, which presented itself close to his pillow, accompanied by a slave girl with a lamp in her hand.

A moon-faced beauty rose upon his sight,
Like the sun sparkling, full of bloom and fragrance ;
Her eye-brows bended like the archer's bow,
Her ringlets fateful as the warrior's kamund ;
And graceful as the lofty cypress tree,
She moved towards the champion, who surprised
At this enchanting vision, asked the cause
Which brought her thither. Softly thus she spoke :
" I am the daughter of the king, my name
Tahmineh, no one from ' behind the screen
Of privacy has yet beheld me, none ;
Nor even heard the echo of my voice.
But I have heard of thy prodigious deeds,
Of thy unequalled valour and renown."

Rustom was still more astonished when he was apprised of the nature of this extraordinary adventure, and anxiously asked more particularly the object of her wishes. She replied that she had become enamoured of him, on account of the fame and the glory of his actions, and in consequence had vowed to God that she would espouse no other man. " I employed spies to seize upon Rakush and secure him to obtain a foal of his breed, and happily Almighty God has conducted thee to Samengán to fulfil my desires. I have been irresistibly impelled to make this disclosure, and now I depart ; only, to-morrow, do thou solicit the consent of my father to our union, and he certainly will not refuse to bless us." Rustom acceded

to the flattering proposal, and in the morning the nuptial engagement was sanctioned by the king.

Joyous the monarch smiled, and gave his child,
According to the customs of the kingdom,
To that brave champion.

Rustum could not remain long with his bride, and when parting from her he said: "If the Almighty should bless thee with a daughter, place this amulet² in her hair; but if a son, bind it on his arm, and it will inspire him with the disposition and valour of Narimán." Having said these words, and Rakush being at the same time restored to him, he took leave, and went away to his own country.

How wept that angel-face at parting, grief
Subdued her heart; but when nine months had past,
A boy was born as lovely as the moon,
The image of his father, and of Sám,
And Narimán—for in one little month
He had attained the growth of a full year;
His spreading chest was like the chest of Zál.
When nine, there was not in that country round
One who could equal him in feats of arms.

² It seems by the text that the Mohreh, or amulet, of Rustem was celebrated throughout the world for its wonderful virtues. The Mohrehi Suliman, Solomon's Seal, was a talisman of extraordinary power, said to be capable of rendering objects invisible, and of creating every kind of magical illusion. Josephus relates that he saw a certain Jew, named Eleazar, draw the devil out of an old woman's nostril, by the application of Solomon's Seal to her nose, in the presence of the Emperor Vespasian! But Mohreh is more properly an amulet, or spell, against misfortune. The wearer of one of them imagines himself safe under every situation of danger.

The application of the magical instrument to the mouth was often indispensable. Thus Angelica in the *Orlando Furioso*:

Del dito se lo leva, e a mano, a mano,
Se'l chiude in bocca, e in men, che non balena,
Così dagli occhi di Ruggier si cela,
Come fa'l Sol, quando la nube il vela.

Canto xi. St. 6.

Then from her hand she took with eager haste,
And twixt her lips, the shining circlet placed,
And instant vanished from Roger's sight!
Like Phœbus when a cloud obscures his light.

HOOLE.

Hatim placed the talisman in his mouth when he plunged into the cauldron of boiling oil. (See "Hatim Ta'i," a Persian Romance, full of magic, and the wild and marvellous adventures of Knight-errantry.) Aristotle speaks of the rings of Battus which inspired the wearer with *GRATITUDE AND HONOUR*! Faith in rings and amulets prepared at particular seasons, under certain mysterious forms and circumstances, is an ancient superstition, but in Persia and India,

The king of Samengán named him Sohráb ; and when the youth was ten years old, he said to his mother : “ People ask me who my father is, and want to know his name ! ” To this, Tahmíneh replied : “ Thy father’s name is Rustem,

Since the God of creation created the earth,
To a hero like Rustem he never gave birth.”

And she then described the valour and renown of his ancestors, which excited in the breast of Sohráb the desire of being immediately introduced to his father ; but his mother endeavoured to repress his eagerness, and told him to beware—

For if he knows thou’rt his, he will remove thee
From me, and thy sweet home ; from thee divided,
Thy mother’s heart will break in agony !

Rustem had sent a present of jewels and precious stones to Tahmíneh, with inquiries respecting her offspring, and the reply she returned was, that a daughter was the fruit of their union. This intelligence disappointed him, and he afterwards thought no more of Samengán. Tahmíneh again said to Sohráb : “ Beware also of speaking too publicly of thy relationship to Rustem, for fear of Afrásiyáb depriving me of thee.”—“ Never,”

there is hardly a man without his Bazúbund, or bracelet, to preserve him from the influence of the Demons. “ The women of condition, in Persia, have small silver plates of a circular form, upon which are engraved sentences from the Koran ; these, as well as the Talismans, they bind about their arms with pieces of red and green silk, and look upon them as never-failing charms against the fascinations of the devil, wicked spirits, etc.” (Francklin’s *Tour to Persia*.) Rustem had also a magic garment, or cloak, called according to the Burhaníkatia, Buburiyan. Some say that he received it from his father Zal, and others, that it was made of the skin of a leopard, or some similar animal, which Rustem killed on the mountain Sham. It had the property of resisting the impression of every weapon, it was proof against fire, and would not sink in water. Something like the charm in the curse of Kehama.

I charm thy life,
From the weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,
From the serpent’s tooth,
And the beasts of blood.

Burbur is an animal of the tiger kind, said to be superior in strength to the lion. The famous heroes of antiquity usually wore the skins of wild beasts. Hercules wore the skin of the Namaean lion. The skins of panthers and leopards were worn by the Greek and Trojan chiefs. Virgil says of Acestes,

occurrit Acestes,
Horridus in jaculis, et pelle Libystidos ursae.

Aen. B. 5. v. 36.

said he, " will I conceal the name of my father ; nay, I will go to him myself :

Even now, I will oppose the Tartar host,
Whate'er their numbers—Káús shall be hurled
From his imperial throne, and Tús subdued—
To Rustem I will give the crown and sceptre,
And place him on the seat, whence Káús ruled
His myriad subjects—I will seize the throne
Of stern Afrásiyáb ; my javelin's point
Shall pierce the Heaven of Heavens. And since 'tis so—
Between my glorious father and myself,
No crowned tyrant shall remain unpunished."

Tahmíneh wept bitterly, but her entreaties were of no avail—the youth being unalterably fixed in his determination. One day he told her that he wanted a suitable war-horse, and immediately the royal stables were explored ; but the only animal of sufficient size and vigour that could be found there, was the foal produced from Rakush, which was at length brought to him.

His nerve and action pleased the boy,
He stroked and patted him with joy ;
And on his back the saddle placed,
The mouth and head the bridle graced,
And springing on th' impatient steed,
He proved his fitness and his speed.

Satisfied with the horse he had obtained, and the arms and armour with which he was supplied, he announced his resolution of going to war against Káús, and conquering the kingdom of Persia for Rustem ! The news of Sohráb's preparations soon reached Afrásiyáb, who hailed the circumstance as peculiarly favourable to his own ambitious ends ; and taking advantage of the youth's enthusiasm, sent an army to his assistance, declaring that Káús was also his enemy, and that he was anxious to share with him in the glory of overcoming the imperial despot. Sohráb readily accepted the offer, and the Tartar legions, his auxiliaries, were commanded by two noted warriors, Húmán and Bármán, to whom Afrásiyáb gave the following instructions : " It must be so contrived that Rustem and Sohráb shall not know each other's person or name. They must be brought together in battle. Sohráb is the youngest, and will no doubt overcome Rustem, in which case the conqueror may be easily dispatched by stratagem, and when both are destroyed, the empire of Persia will be all my own ! " Furnished with these

instructions, the Tartar leaders united with Sohráb, and commenced their march towards Persia. There was a fortress on the road, in which Hujír, a famous warrior, was stationed; and when Sohráb arrived at that fortress, he rushed out alone to oppose the progress of the invader, crying hastily—

“ And who art thou? I am myself Hujír
The valiant champion, come to conquer thee,³
And to lop off that towering head of thine.”

Sohráb smiled at this fierce menace, and a sharp conflict ensued between the two combatants, in which the vain boaster was precipitately thrown from his horse, and afterwards made a prisoner by the stripling-warrior. Gurd-afíd, the daughter of Gustahem, perceiving this unhappy result, left the fort precipitately for the purpose of encountering the youth, and being revenged upon him.

When tidings reached her of the fate Hujír
Had thus provoked, she dressed herself in mail,
And, hastily, beneath her helmet hid
Her glossy ringlets; down she, from the fort,
Came bravely like a lion, nobly mounted;
And as she approached the hostile army, called
With an undaunted voice. Sohráb beheld
The gallant foe with smiles, believing her
A boy of tender years, and, wondering, saw
The vigour of the arm opposed to him;
The force with which the pointed spear was thrown.
Assailed so bravely, he drew forth his noose,
And, casting it around the enemy, brought
Her headlong to the ground. Off flew her helm,
When her luxuriant tresses scattered loose,
And cheeks of radiant bloom, her sex betrayed!

When the astonishment produced by this unexpected discovery had subsided, Sohráb regarded her with tender emotion, and securely made her his captive; but Gurd-afíd promptly addressed him, and said: “ Allow me to return to the fort;

³ This haughty manner was common among the heroes of antiquity. “ And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field,” 1 Samuel xvii. 44. This is like the boast of Hujír. These denunciations are frequent in Homer as well as Firdawsi. Thus Diomed to Glaucus:

If the fruits of earth,
Sustain thy life and human be thy birth;
Bold as thou art, too prodigal of breath,
Approach and enter the dark gates of death!

POPE, *Iliad*, vi. 42.

all the treasure and property it contains are at my command, and shall be given to thee as my ransom. My father is old, and his fondest hopes are centred in me. Be therefore considerate and merciful." Sohráb was too young and ardent not to be carried away by his feelings ; he was affected by her beauty and her tears, and set her at liberty ! As soon as the damsels had re-entered the fortress, a council was held to deliberate on the exigencies of the time, and the garrison resolved upon evacuating the place by secret passages during the ensuing night. When morning dawned, Sohráb approached the gate, and not a person was anywhere to be found. Grieved and disappointed, sorrow preyed deeply upon his heart, losing, as he had done, so foolishly, the lovely heroine of whom he had become enamoured.

The father, and daughter, and the garrison, shaped their course immediately to the court of Káús, to whom they related that a wonderful hero had come from Túrán, against whose courage it was in vain to contend, and said to be not more than fourteen years of age ! What then would he be, they thought, when arrived at maturity ! The capture of Hujír and the accounts of Sohráb's amazing prowess, filled Káús with alarm, and the warrior Gíw was forthwith deputed to Zábulistán to call Rustem to his aid. The letter ran thus : "A youthful warrior, named Sohráb, has invaded Persia from Túrán, and thou art alone able to avert his destructive progress :

"Thou art the sole support of Persia : thou—
Endued with nerve of more than human power ;
Thou art the conqueror of Mázinderán ;
And at Hámáveran thou didst restore
The king to liberty and life ; thy sword
Makes the sun weep, thy glorious actions fling
Unequalled splendour o'er the kingly throne."

When the letter was received, Rustem inquired anxiously about the particular form and character of Sohráb, whom Gíw described as being like Sám and Narimán. This made him ponder, and he thought it might be his own son ; but he recollected Tahímneh had written from Samengán, that her child was a daughter ! He, however, still pondered, although Gíw repeated the commands of the king that no time should be lost. Regardless of the summons, Rustem called for wine and music, and made a feast, which continued seven days. On the eighth he said, "This too must be a day of festivity " ; and it was

not till the ninth that he ordered Rakush to be saddled for the journey. He then departed with his brother Zúára and the Zábul troops, and at length arrived at the royal court. Káus was in great indignation at the delay that had occurred, and directed both Rustem and Gíw to be impaled alive for the offence they had committed in not attending to his instructions. Tús was commanded to execute this order; but when he stretched out his hand towards Rustem, the champion dashed it aside; and retiring from the assembly, and vaulting upon his horse, thus addressed the king :

“ Weak and insensate ! take not to thy breast
Devouring fire ; thy latest actions still
Outdo the past in baseness. Go, thyself,
And, if thou canst, impale Sohráb alive !
When wrath inflames my heart, what is Káus !
What, but a clod of earth ? Him must I dread ?
No, to the Almighty power alone I bend.
The warriors of the empire sought to place
The crown upon my head ; but I was faithful,
And held the kingdom’s laws and customs sacred.
Had I looked to the throne, thou wouldest not now
Have had the power with which thou art surrounded,
To injure one who is thy safest friend.
But I deserve it all ; for I have ever,
Ungrateful monarch ! done thee signal service.”

Saying this, Rustem withdrew ; and as he went away, the hearts of all the courtiers and warriors sunk with the most painful anticipations of unavoidable ruin to the empire. Gúdarz afforded the only spark of hope, for he was in great favour with the king ; and it fortunately so happened, that by his interposition, the blind anger of Káus was soon appeased. His next office was to follow Rustem, and to restore the harmony which had been destroyed. He said to him :

“ Thou know’st that Káus is a brainless king,
Wayward, capricious, and to anger prone ;
But quickly he repents, and now he seeks
For reconciliation. If thou’rt deaf
To this good change in him, and nourishest
The scorn he has inspired, assuredly
The people of our nation will be butchered ;
For who can now resist the Tartar brand ?
Persia again will groan beneath the yoke
Of the Túránian despot. Must it be ?
Have pity on thy countrymen, and never
Let it be bruited through the scornful world,
That Rustem feared to fight a beardless boy ! ”

The speech of Gúdarz had its due effect ; and the champion, with altered feelings, returned to the court of the king ; who, rising from his throne, received him with the highest honour and respect, and apologised for the displeasure into which he had been betrayed.

“Wrathful and wayward in my disposition,
I felt impatient at the long delay ;
But now I see my error, and repentance
Must, for that insult unprovoked, atone.”

Rustem, in reply, assured the king of his allegiance, and of his readiness to undertake whatever might be desired of him ; but Káús said :

“To-day let us feast ; let us banquet to-day,
And to-morrow to battle we'll hasten away.”

Having feasted all night, in the morning Káús placed all his warriors, and his army, under the command of Rustem ; who immediately set off to oppose the progress of Sohráb.

The countless thousands seemed to hide the earth ;
The Heavens, too, were invisible ; so great
And overspreading was the Persian host.
Thus they rolled on, until they reached the fort,
The barrier-fort, where still Sohráb remained.

When the stripling from the top of the fort first observed the approach of the Persians, he said to Húman : “Look, on every side at the coming legions” ; at which the Tartar chief turned pale. But the youth added : “Fear not, by the favour of Heaven I will soon disperse them” ; and then called for a goblet of wine, full of confidence in his own might, and in the result of the expected battle. Descending from the walls, he proceeded to his pavilion, pitched on the plain in front of the fort, and sat in pomp among the chiefs of the Túráanian army.

Rustem repaired thither in secret, and in disguise,⁴ to watch the motions of his formidable enemy, and beheld him sitting

⁴ It appears that in Rustem's time there was nothing dishonourable in the character of a spy. The adventure of Diomed and Ulysses in the tenth book of the Iliad shows a similar conclusion with respect to the Greeks. Alfred entered the hostile camp of the Danes, under “the disguise of a harper, and so entertained them with his music and facetious humours, that he met with a welcome reception.”

drinking wine, surrounded by great men and heroes. Zindeh, a warrior, retiring from the banquet, saw the shadow of someone, and going nearer to the spot, found it to be a man in ambush. He said, "Who art thou?" when Rustem struck him a blow on the neck, which stretched him lifeless on the ground, and effected his escape. In a few minutes another person came, who seeing the body, brought a light, and discovered it to be Zindeh. When the fatal circumstance was communicated to Sohráb, the youth well knew that it must have been the work of the enemy, who had secretly entered his pavilion, and he solemnly vowed that next day he would be revenged on the Iranians, and especially on Káús, wherever he might be found.

In the meantime Rustem described to Káús the appearance and splendour of Sohráb :

" In stature perfect, as the cypress tree,
No Tartar ever boasted such a presence ;
Túrán, nor even Persia, now can shew
A hero of his bold and gallant bearing ;
Seeing his form thou would'st at once declare
That he is Sám, the warrior ; so majestic
In mien and action ! "

When morning dawned, Sohráb took Hujír to the top of the fortress, and speaking kindly to him, promised to release him if he would answer truly what he had to ask. Commencing his anxious inquiries, he then said : " To whom belongs that pavilion surrounded by elephants ? " Hujír replied : " It belongs to king Káús." Sohráb resumed : " To whom belongs the tent on the right ? " " To the warrior Tús." " To whom, then, belongs that crimson pavilion ? " " To Gúdarz." " Whose is that green pavilion, with the Gáváni banner flying over it, and in which a throne is seen ? " Hujír knew that this was Rustem's tent ; but he reflected that if he told the truth, Sohráb might in his wrath attack the champion unprepared, and slay him ; better it would be, he thought, to deny his being present, and accordingly he said : " That tent belongs to the chief of the troops sent by the Emperor of Chin in aid of king Káús." " Dost thou know his name ? " " No, I do not." Sohráb meditated, and said in his heart : " I see here the plain indications of Rustem's presence, which my mother gave me—why am I deceived ? " He again questioned Hujír, and received the same answer. " Then where is Rustem's tent ? "

he asked, impatiently. "It appears that he has not yet arrived from Zábulistán."

At this the stripling's heart was sunk in grief ;
The tokens which his mother gave, were all
Conspicuous ; yet his father was denied ;
So Fate decreed it. Still he lingering hoped
By further question, and encouragement,
To win the important secret from Hujír.

Again he said, with persuasive gentleness, "Look well around ; try if thou can't find the tent of Rustem, and thou shalt be richly rewarded for thy trouble." "Rustum's tent may be in some degree similar to that ; but it is not Rustem's." Hujír then went on in praise of the champion, and said :

" When roused to fury in the battle-field,
What is a man, an elephant, or pard ;
The strength of five-score valiant men exceeds not
Rustum's unwearied nerve and towering frame."

Then Sohráb said to him : " Why dost thou praise Rustem in this manner to me ? Where hast thou seen the strife of heroes ? " Hujír became alarmed, and thought within himself, if I point out Rustem's tent, no doubt he will be killed by this ambitious youth, and then there will be no one to defend the Persian throne. Sohráb continued with emotion : " Point out to me the tent of Rustem, this moment, or thou shalt die ! " Hujír again paused, and said within himself : " More honourable will it be to save the lives of Rustem and Káús than my own. What is my life compared to theirs ? Nothing ! " He then said aloud : " Why thus seek for a pretext to shed my blood—why these pretences, since my life is in thy power ! " Sohráb turned from him in despair, and descending from the rampart on which he stood, arrayed himself in armour, and prepared for battle. His first object was to attack the centre where Káús was posted ; thither he proceeded, and called out aloud : " I have sworn to be revenged on Káús for the murder of Zindeh ; if he has any honour let him meet me in single combat." Sohráb stood alone on the plain, firm as the mountain Alberz, and such terror had seized upon the hearts of the warriors, that not a man had courage enough to advance a step against him. After a short space, Sohráb called out again : " The king cannot be excused. It is not the custom of kings to be without honour, or to skulk away like foxes from the power

of lions in battle. O, Káús, wherefore dost thou hesitate to enter the field ? ”

“ Why have they named thee, Kai-Káús, the king,
If thou’rt unfit to combat with the brave ? ”

Káús was appalled by the insulting boldness of the youth, and called to his friends to inform Rustem of the dilemma into which he was thrown, and the panic of his warriors, who seemed deprived of their senses. But Rustem had resolved not to fight on that day. “ Let another chief,” said he, “ oppose the Tartar, and when he is overthrown it will be my turn.” Káús then sent Tús to urge him to comply, and the champion being made acquainted with the distress and terror of the king, hurried on his armour, and left his tent. On the way, he said to himself : “ This enemy must be of the demon-breed, otherwise why should such an impression have been made on the warriors, that they are afraid to oppose him.” Then throwing aside all apprehension on his own account, and placing his trust in God, he appeared before Sohráb, who invited him to go to a little distance, and fight apart from the beholders. The invitation being accepted, Sohráb said : “ No mortal has power to resist this arm—thou must perish ! ” “ Why this boasting ? Thou art but a child, and where hast thou seen the conflicts of the valiant ? I am myself an old experienced warrior ; I slew the White Demon and all his Demon-host, and neither lion, nor dragon, nor tiger, can escape from me.

“ Compassion rises in my heart,
I cannot slay thee—let us part !
Thy youth, thy gallantry, demand
A different fate than murderous brand.”

“ Perhaps,” replied Sohráb, “ thou art Rustem ! ” “ No, I am only the servant of Rustem.” At this declaration,

Aspiring hope was turned to sad dismay,
And darkness quenched the joyous beam of day.

At first the two combatants fought with spears, which were soon shivered to pieces ; then with swords, which became hacked like saws, and then with clubs. So fiercely they contended that their mail was torn in pieces, their weapons bent, and their horses almost exhausted. Blood and sweat poured down on the ground as they struggled, and their throats were parched with thirst. Both stood still for a while to breathe.

Rustem said to himself: "I never saw man or Demon with such activity and strength"; and Sohráb thus addressed the champion gaily, "When thou art ready, come and try the effects of bow and arrow!" Then then engaged with bows and arrows, but without any decisive result. Afterwards they used their hands and arms in wrestling, and Rustem applied as much force as might have shaken a mountain, to raise Sohráb from the ground, but he could not move him. Sohráb then endeavoured to lift up his antagonist, but in vain. Both were satisfied, and forsook each other's hold. Sohráb, however, had recourse to his mace, and struck a heavy blow on the head of Rustem, who reeled with the pain it inflicted. The laughing stripling, in consequence, spoke tauntingly to him, and Rustem said, "Night is coming on, we will resume the battle to-morrow." Sohráb replied, "Go, I have given thee enough, I will now let Káüs feel the sharpness of my sword!" And, at the same moment that he proceeded against the Persian king, Rustem galloped forward to be revenged on the Túrániens. But in the midst of his career, the unprotected situation of Káüs struck his mind, and returning to his own army, found that Sohráb had slain a number of his warriors, and was still committing great havoc. He called to him, and said, "Let there be a truce to-night, but if thou art still for war, oppose thyself to me along!" Sohráb was himself weary, and closed with the first proposal. Both accordingly retired to their tents.

In the night Káüs sent for Rustem, and observed, that during the whole period of his life he had never witnessed or heard of such overwhelming valour as had been exhibited by the young invader; to which Rustem replied, "I know not, but he seems to be formed of iron. I have fought him with sword, and arrow, and mace, and he is still unhurt. In the warrior's art he is my superior, and Heaven knows what may be the result to-morrow." Having retired to his own place of rest, Rustem passed the night in petitions to the Almighty, and to his brother Zúára he said, "Alas! I have felt that the power of this youth's arm is prodigious. Should anything untoward happen in the ensuing fight, go immediately to Zál, and think not of opposition to this triumphant Tartar, for certainly the whole of Persia will fall under his control."

Meanwhile Sohráb, having returned to his tent, said to Húmán, "This old man has the strength and the port of Rustem; God forbid that, if the signs which my mother gave

be true, he should prove my father!" Húmán said, in answer: "I have often seen Rustem, and I know him; but this is not the champion of Persia—and though his horse is like Rakush, it is not the same." From this declaration of Húmán, Sohráb felt assured that this was not Rustem.

As soon as the morning dawned both the combatants were opposed to each other; and when the eye of Sohráb fell upon Rustem, an instinctive feeling of affection rose in his heart, and he wished to close the contest in peace.

"Let us together sit and shun the strife,
Which sternly seeks each other's valued life;
Let others mix in fight, whilst we agree,
And yield our hearts to peace and amity.
Affection fills my breast with hopes and fears,
For thee my cheeks are overflowed with tears;
How have I ceaseless sought to know thy name,
Oh, tell it now, thou man of mighty fame."

To this address, Rustem replied, that the words of the preceding evening were of a different import, and the agreement was to wrestle to-day. "I am not," said he, "a person of trick or artifice, nor a child; as thou art, but I am prepared to wrestle with thee." Sohráb finding every effort fruitless, all his hopes disappointed, and his views frustrated at every step, dismounted and prepared for the contest. Rustem was already on foot, tightening his girdle previous to the struggle.

Like lions they together tugged, and strained,
Their nervous limbs; and from their bodies flowed
Streams of red blood and sweat. Sohráb with force
Equal to a mad elephant's, raised up
The champion, and upon the sandy plain
Dashed him down backward. Then upon his breast,
Fierce as a tiger on a prostrate elk,
He sat, all ready to lop off the head.

But Rustem called out in time, and said, "According to the custom in my country, the first time a combatant in wrestling is thrown, his head is not severed from his body, but only after the second fall." As soon as Sohráb heard these words, he returned his dagger into the sheath, and allowed his antagonist to rise.

When the youth returned to his tent, and told Húmán what he had done, the Túránian chief lamented deeply the thoughtlessness of his conduct. "To ensnare the lion," said he, "and then set him at liberty to devour thee, was certainly a foolish

thing!" But Sohráb said, "He is still in my power, being inferior to me in skill and strength, and I shall to-morrow be able to command the same advantage." To this, Húmán replied, "The wise never look upon an enemy as weak and contemptible!"

When Rustem had escaped from the battle with Sohráb, he purified himself with water, and prostrated himself all night in devotion to the Almighty, praying that his former strength and power might be vouchsafed to him. It is said that in the first instance God gave him so much strength that in placing his foot upon a rock it sunk to its centre. But as he was thus unable to walk, he prayed for a suitable diminution of power, and the prayer was accepted. With this diminished power, though still prodigious, he was now again favoured, and on the following day the fight was renewed. "What! here again?" said Sohráb triumphantly.

Again their backs they wrestling bend,⁵
Again their limbs they seem to rend ;
They seize each other's girdle-band,
And strain and grasp with foot and hand,
Doubt hanging still on either side,
From morn to sombre even-tide.

At length Rustem made a powerful effort, and got Sohráb under him. Apprehensive, however, that he had not strength enough to keep him there, he plunged his dagger in the side of the unhappy youth, and fatally prevented all further resistance. Groaning heavily, the dying Sohráb said: "Alas! I came here in anxious search of my father, and it has cost me my life. But if thou wert a fish, and sought refuge at the bottom of the ocean, or a star in the heavens, my father will be revenged on thee for this deed."—"What is thy father's

⁵ Wrestling is a favourite sport in the east. From Homer down to Statius, the Greek and Roman poets have introduced wrestling in their Epic poems. Wrestlers, like the gladiators at Rome, are exhibited in India on a variety of occasions. Prize wrestlers were common in almost every European nation. Drayton in his "Poly-Olbion" alludes to this manly exercise in England.

This isle in wrestling doth excel :
With collars be they yoked, to prove the arm at length,
Like bulls set head to head, with meer deliver strength :
Or by the girdles grasp'd, they practice with the hip,
The forward, backward, falx, the mar, the turn, the trip :
When stript into their shirts each other they invade,
Within a spacious ring, for the beholders made,
According to the law.

name?" said the champion. "His name is Rustem, and my mother is the daughter of the king of Samengán." On hearing these words, the world faded before Rustem's eyes, and he fell senseless on the ground. After some time he rose up in deep agitation, and asked Sohráb what tokens he possessed to prove the truth of his assertion, "for I am Rustem!" he said in agony. "Alas!" rejoined Sohráb, "the instinctive feeling was ever at my heart, but, wonderful to say, it received no mutual assurance from thine! If a token is required, ungird my mail, and there behold the amulet which my mother bound on my arm and which Rustem gave to her, saying that it would be of extraordinary use on a future day." The sight of the amulet was an overwhelming blow to the father—he exclaimed in bitterness of soul: "O cruelly art thou slain my son! my son! What father ever thus destroyed his own offspring! I shall never be released from the horror of this dreadful crime, and therefore better will it be that I put an end to my own existence!" But Sohráb dissuaded him from this resolution. "It has been my destiny thus to perish, it can be of no avail to kill they self. Let me depart, alone—and thou remain for ever." Rustem, in utter despair, flung himself on the ground, and covered his head with dust and ashes; whilst Sohráb continued writhing and fluttering like a bird, from the anguish of his wound.

When the people of Káús perceived Rakush riderless, they reported to him that Rustem was dead, and a loud wail of sorrow arose from the whole army. The messenger who was sent to ascertain the particulars of the misfortune, found Rustem rolling in the dust in the deepest affliction, and Sohráb at the point of death; and raising up the head of the champion, asked him what had happened. "I have done that," said he, "which has made me weary of life. I have, in my old age, slain my son!" Zúára, his brother, hearing this, turned in sorrow to Sohráb, who said to him: "Such is my destiny, such the will of fortune. It was decreed that I should perish by the hand of my father. I came like a flash of lightning, and now I depart like the empty wind." Both Rustem and Zúára were inconsolable, but Sohráb again tried to soothe them, and said: "No person remains for ever in the world; then why this grief?" He then addressed Rustem, "O let not those who have followed my fortunes be put to trouble, or punished on my account—they are not to blame." And Rustem set his mind entirely at rest about them.

Gúdarz was now sent by the champion to Káús to ask him for a cordial balm which he possessed of wonderful virtue, in the hope that it might restore Sohráb to life. But when the king heard the request, he said : " Doubtless the cordial will make him better, but I cannot forget the scandal and disgrace which this youth heaped upon me even in presence of my own army. Besides which, he threatened to deprive me of my crown, and give it to Rustem. I will not serve him."

When Gúdarz heard this cruel speech,
Which flinty heart alone could teach,
He hastened back and told the tale ;
But though it was his fate to fail,
Rustem himself, the king might calm,
And gain the life-reviving balm !
Then Rustem to his sovereign went,
But scarcely had he reached the tent,
Ere news arrived that all was past,—
The warrior-youth had breathed his last !

Rustem returned with the utmost speed, and continued mourning intensely. " Son of the valiant ! thou art gone, the descendant of heroes has departed. Right would it be were I to cut off both my hands, and sit for evermore in dust and darkness," The body of Sohráb was then placed on a bier, and there was nothing but lamentation.

Alas ! for that valour, that wisdom of thine,
Alas ! that sweet life thou wert doomed to resign ;
Alas ! for the anguish thy mother must feel,
And thy father's affliction, which time will not heal.

The champion now proceeded to his tent, and consigned all his property, warlike appurtenances, and armour, to the flames.

Why should affection cling to this vain world,
Still fleeting, never for a moment fixed ?
Who that has reason or reflection ever
Can be deceived by life's delusive joys ?

Káús himself now repaired to Rustem, and offered him the consolation he required :

" No one is free from sorrow, all
Who sojourn on this earthly ball,
Must weep o'er friends and kindred gone,
And some are left to mourn, alone.
'Twas ever thus since time began,
For sorrow is the lot of man."

Upon this Rustem observed : " Thus it is, the arrow has reached the mark. My son is dead ! and after this, I shall never more gird my loins against the Túrániens. Let me request that Húmán may be allowed to return with his army unmolested to his own country, and that peace be made with Afrásiyáb." The king acceded to this solicitation, saying, " My heart bleeds for thee, and on thy account I will overlook the injuries and insults which I have received from my implacable enemy. Let them go." Zúára was appointed to see Húmán and the Tartar troops across the Jihún, and at the same time Káús with his army returned to Irán.

Meanwhile Rustem accompanied the bier of Sohráb to Sistan, and was met by Zál, with his household and troops in mourning raiment, throwing ashes over their heads. He said to his father, " Alas ! in this narrow coffin lies the very image of Sám Súwár !" and when the bier was conveyed into the house, loud and continued lamentations burst forth from the mother of Rustem and the women of her family. At length the body of Sohráb was honourably interred, and a lasting monument erected to his memory.

When the melancholy tidings of the stripling's fate arrived at Samengán, and were communicated to Tahmíneh, she lighted a fire and threw herself into it ; and when rescued from the flames by her people, she burnt her flowing hair, and disfigured her body in the agony of desperation.

With her clenched hand she tore her raven locks,
Locks of ensnaring beauty, as these words,
Uttered with frenzied look, and trembling accent,
Fell from her lips : " My child, my darling child !
Where art thou now, mixed with the worthless earth,
In a remote, inhospitable land ?
Seeking thy father, what hast thou obtained ?
Death from a parent's hand ! O how I loved thee,
And watched thee night and day ; whom can I now
Clasp in these longing arms, to whom relate
The agony I suffer ! O my child !
Where were the tokens which I gave to thee,
Why didst thou not present them to his view ?
But wherefore did I madly stay behind,
And not point out to thee thy mighty father ? "
Thus wildly she exclaimed, and all around
Seeing her frantic grief, shed floods of tears,
The stripling's horse was brought, and to her bosom
She pressed the hoofs, and kissed the head and face,
Bathing them with her tears. His mail, and helm,

Bow, spear, and mace, his bridle, shield, and saddle,
Were all before her, and with these she beat
Her bursting head, as if she could not feel
Aught but the wounds of her maternal spirit,
Thus she unceasing raved and wept by turns,
Till one long year had passed—then, welcome death
Released her from the heavy load of life,
The pressure of unmitigated woe.

THE KAZI OF EMESSA¹

THERE lived once, in the same city, an affluent Jew and an indigent Mussulman. The latter fell at length into such distress that he went to the Jew, and begged a loan of a hundred dinars ; saying that he had a favourable opportunity of trading with the money, and promising half the profits in return for the favour. The Jew, though a great miser, had long cast the eyes of affection on the Mussulman's wife, a woman of extraordinary beauty, but of strict chastity, and fondly attached to her husband. He hoped, however, that if he could involve the poor man in distress, and force her to intercede for him, he might gain his wicked purpose. With this motive, therefore, he spoke kindly, and said, " If you will give the pledge I shall require, you shall have the money without interest." The Mussulman, somewhat astonished at his liberality, asked what pledge he wanted, and the Jew replied : " Consent that, in case you do not pay the money by a given day, I shall cut off a seer² of flesh from your body." But the poor man, fearing the dangers and delays which might befall him, refused. In a couple of months, however, being hard pressed by poverty and the hunger of his children, he came back and took the money ; and the Jew had the precaution to call in several respectable men of the Muhammadan faith to witness the terms of their agreement.

So the Mussulman set off on his journey, which was prosperous ; and sent the money in good time to his wife, that she might discharge the debt. But she, not knowing what pledge had been given, and being much perplexed by domestic difficulties, applied the money to her household purposes ; and the penalty of the bond was incurred. It was some time after this

¹ Kázi—properly transliterated, Qázi, and pronounced Kauzee—is the title of a judge in Muhammadan countries ; he decides cases by the law as laid down in the Kurán and its commentaries, draws up marriage contracts, and so forth. Emessa is the ancient name of the town of Hums.

² A *seer* is a weight which varies according to the article sold—say, in this case, about a pound.

that the Mussulman was joyfully returning, with large gains, and in the confident belief that he had escaped from the snares of the Jew, when he fell among thieves, who plundered him of all, and he came home as poor as he went out.

Presently the Jew called and politely asked after his health ; and the next day he returned to claim the fulfilment of his bond. The luckless merchant told him his story ; the relentless Jew replied : " My money or the pledge." And thus they went on for some days in hot contention till the neighbours, interfering, advised them to refer the matter to the Kazi. To the Kazi accordingly they went ; who, after a patient hearing of the case, decreed that the merchant had forfeited his pledge, and must submit to the penalty. But to this he would by no means consent ; protesting against the legality of the decree, and claiming a right of appeal. Upon which the Jew desired him to name the judge with whose decision he would be content ; and he selected the Kazi of Emessa, as a man of profound knowledge and strict justice. The Jew agreed to the appeal, on consideration that both parties should bind themselves to accept his judgment as final ; and this point being settled, they both set out for the city of Emessa.

They had not gone far when they met a runaway mule, with his master in pursuit, who called to them to stop the animal or turn him back ; and the merchant, after several vain efforts, flung a stone at the beast, which knocked out one of his eyes. Upon this the owner came up, and seizing the poor merchant, accused him of blinding his mule, and insisted on the full value. To this, however, the Jew objected, as he had a prior claim ; but he told him that he might come with them if he liked, and hear what the Kazi might have to say in the matter. And so the muleteer joined them, and the three pursued their journey together.

At night they reached a village, and as it was dark, they went quietly to sleep on the flat roof of a house ; but by-and-by there was an uproar in the village, and the merchant, unable to resist the pleasure of mixing in the tumult, jumped suddenly down from the roof, and fell on a man who was sleeping below and caused his death. The two sons of the deceased laid hands on the unfortunate man, and threatened to kill him in retaliation. But the Jew and the muleteer opposed this design, unless they would first satisfy their demands ; and advised the young men to come along with them, and lay their complaint

before the Kazi. To this the heirs of the deceased consented, and the five now travelled together.

Next day they overtook a poor man whose ass had stuck in the mud, and which, with all his efforts, he could not get out. He begged them to help him ; and while the others took hold each of a corner of the load, and he seized the bridle, the unlucky merchant lugged at the tail, which came off in his hands. The peasant was enraged, and said he must pay for the beast, which was now useless, but the others told him to be quiet, and come along with them, and tell his story to the judge.

Shortly after this they came to Emessa, and were astonished at seeing a venerable man, with a large turban and a robe which came down to his heels, and riding on an ass ; but disgracefully drunk and vomiting. Upon inquiry they learned that he was the censor. A little while after, they reached the mosque, which they found full of people engaged in gambling. And passing on they met a man tossing about on a bier, whom the people were carrying forth to his burial ; and when he protested against the measure, appealing to the bystanders to say whether he was not alive, they assured him that he was certainly dead ; and the poor man was buried.

Next morning they presented themselves before the Kazi, and began all at once to make their complaints ; but the Kazi told them to stop their clamour, and to speak one at a time. So the Jew began : " My lord, this man owes me a hundred dinars, upon the pledge of a pound of his flesh ; command him to pay the money or surrender the pledge." Now it happened that the Kazi and the merchant were old friends ; so when the Kazi asked him what he had to say, he frankly confessed that what the Jew had alleged was all true ; but he was utterly unable to pay the debt : hoping, no doubt, that the contract would be declared null. He was, therefore, astounded at hearing the Kazi declare that if he could not give the money he must pay the penalty ; and when the officers were commanded to prepare a sharp knife for the purpose, he trembled, and gave himself up for lost.

Then the Kazi, addressing the Jew, said : " Arise, take the knife, and cut off the pound of flesh from his body ; but so that there be not a grain more or less. Your just right is one pound exactly ; take neither more or less, by ever so little, and I will make you over to the governor, who will put you to death." To which the Jew replied : " It is not possible to cut it exactly,

but there must needs be a little more or less." But the Kazi told him, it must be a pound exactly, and that any other quantity being unjustifiable, would involve him in guilt. The Jew, being frightened at this interpretation of his right, renounced his claim, and said he would forgive the debt altogether. "Very well," said the Kazi; "but if you have brought the man so far, on a claim which you cannot maintain, it is but reasonable that you should pay him for his time, and the support of his family during his absence." The matter was then referred to arbitration, and the damages being assessed at two hundred dinars, the Jew paid the money and departed.

Next came the muleteer, and told his story; and the Kazi asked him what the value of the mule was; the man said it was fully worth a thousand dirhams before it lost its eye. "This is a very simple case," said the Kazi. "Take a saw, cut the mule in two; give him the blind half, for which he must pay you five hundred dirhams, and keep the other side to yourself." To this the man very much objected, because, he said, the mule was still worth 750 dirhams, so he preferred putting up with his loss, and would give up the suit. The Kazi admitted that he was at liberty to do so, but he must make amends to the man for such a frivolous and vexatious suit; and the poor muleteer kept his blind mule, and had to pay a hundred dinars in the shape of compensation to the merchant.

The next party was called on to state their grievance; and the Kazi, on hearing how the man had been killed, asked the sons if they thought the roof of the college was about the height of the house that the merchant jumped from. They said they thought it was. Upon which he decreed that the merchant should go to sleep on the ground, and that they should get upon the roof and jump down on him; and that as the right of blood belonged to them equally, they must take care to jump both at once. They accordingly went to the roof; but when they looked below, they felt alarmed at the height, and so came down again, declaring that, if they had ten lives, they could not expect to escape. The Kazi said he could not help that: they had demanded retaliation, and retaliation they should have; but he could not alter the law to please them. So they too gave up their claim, and with much difficulty got off, upon paying the merchant two hundred dinars for the trouble they had given him.

Last of all came the owner of the ass, and told the story of

the injury which his poor beast had suffered. "What! another case of retaliation?" said the Kazi. "Well, fetch my ass, and let the man pull off his tail." The beast was accordingly brought, and the man exerted all his strength to revenge the insult which had been put upon his favourite. But an ass which had carried the Kazi was not likely to put up with such an indignity, and soon testified his resentment by several hearty kicks, which made the man faint. When he recovered, he begged leave to decline any further satisfaction; but the Kazi said it was a pity he should not have his revenge, and that he might take his own time. But the more he pulled, the harder the vicious creature kicked, till at last the poor man, all bruises and blood, declared that he had accused the merchant falsely, for his own donkey never had a tail. The Kazi protested, however, that it was contrary to practice to allow a man to deny what he had once alleged, and that he must therefore maintain his suit. Upon which the poor fellow said, he saw how it was; he supposed he would have to pay as well as the rest; and he begged to know how much it was. So, after the usual pretences and dissensions, he was let off for a hundred dinars.

When all the plaintiffs had left the court, the Kazi, collecting the different fines which he had imposed upon them, divided the whole amount into two equal shares, one of which he reserved for himself, and the other he gave to the merchant; but observing that he sat still and seemed very thoughtful, he asked him if he was satisfied. "Perfectly so, my lord," said he; "and full of admiration of your wisdom and justice. But I have seen some strange sights since I came to this city, which perplex me; and I should esteem it a kindness if you would explain them." The Kazi promised to give him all the satisfaction in his power; and having learnt what had perplexed him, thus replied:

"The vintners of this city are a very dishonest set of people, who adulterate the wine, mix water with it, or sell it of an inferior quality. So the censor, every now and then, goes round to examine it; and if he should taste but even so little at each place where it is sold, it will at last get into his head; and that is why he got so drunk yesterday.—The mosque where you saw them gambling has no endowment, and was very much out of repair; so it has been let for a gaming house, and the profit will serve to put it in order as a place of worship.—And as for the man who excited your compassion, I can assure you he was really

dead, as I will show you. Two months ago his wife came into court, and pleaded that her husband had died in a distant country, and claimed legal authority for marrying again. I required her to produce evidence of his death ; and she brought forward two credible witnesses, who deposed to the truth of what she had said. I therefore gave decree accordingly, and she was married. But the other day he came before me, complaining that his wife had taken another husband, and requiring an order that she should return to him ; and as I did not know who he was, I summoned the wife before me, and ordered her to account for her conduct. Upon which she said that he was the man whom she had two months ago proved to be dead ; and that she had married another by my authority. I then told the man that his death had been clearly established on evidence which could not be refuted ; that my decree could not be revoked ; and that all the relief I could afford him was to give orders for his funeral."

The merchant expressed his admiration of the Kazi's acuteness and wisdom, and thanked him for his impartial judgment in his own behalf, as well as for his great condescension in explaining these singular circumstances. He then returned to his own city, where he passed the rest of his days in the frugal enjoyment of the wealth which he had gained at Emessa.

SIAM

A COLLECTION of Siamese stories appeared in 1930, they were collected by Phya Manunet Banham and translated by Reginald Le May. They are excellent tales most of which, like all Oriental tales, have a strong moral attached to them. The story included here is not contained in that collection, but is a variation of a well-known Oriental theme, of which the Sinhalese version is highly amusing. The tale reprinted here, "The Goldsmith," however, is most likely a direct descendant of the Hindu tale, "The Soothsayer's Son."¹

¹ See Natesa Sastri Pandit, *Folklore in Southern India*.





THE GOLDSMITH

A Siamese Variation

THERE was once a Brahman, named Thephasavami (Devasami) who, leaving the city of Pharanasi (Benares), wandered about in a wood, where he saw a lake in which there were an ape, a goldsmith, a tiger and a snake (in danger of being drowned). The Brahman looking at them thought within himself: "I will do a good work" (literally: I will acquire merit for myself). He then took a long creeper which resembled a rope, and threw it to the drowning creatures. The ape creeping along it first got to the shore, and after making obeisance to the Brahman, said: "I am a poor creature, possessing neither silver nor gold nor anything whatever to offer you, my benefactor. Should your Reverence, however, ever happen to come to this forest I will honour you with an offering of fruits." The Brahman then threw the creeper a second time, and the tiger clung to it and was soon ashore. After making obeisance to the Brahman, he said: "I earnestly beg that you, my benefactor, may be pleased to honour me at your convenience with a visit to my

abode yonder" ; with these words he took leave of the Brahman. Then came the snake creeping along the rope, and after paying homage to the Brahman said to him : " I have nothing where-with I may repay your benevolence, but should you ever happen to be in trouble or in danger call me then to mind." All the three animals warned the Brahman saying : " Rescue not that black-haired fellow. If you save him he will bring you to trouble." The snake likewise took his leave and went his way. The Brahman thought within himself, " Those creatures whom I have yet saved are mere irrational beings. Oh ! how could it be right not to do the same to a man. But what about the warning of the beasts ? Am I to pass them unheeded ? " The Brahman could not come to any decision, although he weighed well the *pros* and the *cons* of the question, but at last, taking into consideration the connection of the past and the future with the present, he concluded thus : " I will show him kindness. Should I receive from him evil for good, that will simply be the result of my actions in a former birth." After he had thus deliberated, he threw the rope again and the goldsmith laid fast hold of it and safely reached the land. After making obeisance to the Brahman he said : " I am a goldsmith, and make jewels and vessels of gold and silver for the royal family ; should your Reverence ever have occasion for my services, I beg of you to command me freely." With these respectful words he took his leave of the Brahman.

Some time after, the Brahman visited the forest, and the ape advanced to meet him with a present of fruits of various kinds, and respectfully offered them to him.

As regards the tiger, it happened one day, when he was in quest of prey, that he had met the emperor's son going in state dressed in gold chains and all kinds of costly ornaments, his retinue being then at some distance behind and quite out of sight, and had thrown him down and devoured him. He had bitten off the jewels from the prince's person and had buried them on the spot. Now, when the Brahman went to visit the tiger, the latter fetched the jewels and presented them to the Brahman as a token of his gratitude for the kindness which had been shown to him. The Brahman took them to his house, but thought within himself, " It would not be proper for me to wear such jewels, or even to possess them. I shall take them to the goldsmith, and get him to make me a betel-box of them." For this purpose he called on the goldsmith, who seeing him at

a distance cried out to him, and invited him to the house. The Brahman then showed him the jewels and said : " I have received these jewels from the tiger whom I saved from drowning as a token of his gratitude for the favour done to him. I should wish to have them converted into a betel-box."

Treacherous thoughts entered the goldsmith's mind, as he was of a perverted nature from his very origin and he forgot the kindness which he had received from the good man. He only saw what was present before his eyes, but gave no thought to what might happen in the future. Planning malicious schemes in his mind he said to himself : " I will go and report this matter to the Governor. That will, I am sure, bring me much good luck at the expense of this Brahman." He said therefore to the Brahman : " May it please my benefactor to wait a while here. I have some business to attend to, but I will be back immediately. He then went to the Governor and informed him that the robber who had murdered the prince had brought to him his jewels, which he had recognised and secured, and that the robber was at that moment in his house. The Governor sent out the bailiffs who, being led by the goldsmith, seized the Brahman and brought him before the judge with the jewels. Being questioned from whence he got the jewels, and commanded to speak the truth, the Brahman thought to himself : " If I say that I received the jewels from the tiger my statement will not meet with any credence. What has happened to me is just what I have deserved. My actions in a former birth have brought on me this calamity, and I shall not be able therefore to extricate myself from it." The Governor then took the Brahman with him to His Majesty the king, and said to him reverently : " The Brahman who murdered the prince has been arrested, and I have brought him here together with the costly jewels. Everything has been recovered by the bailiffs." The king flew into a terrible rage, and gave commandment that the Brahman should be put to death. But in order that his blood might not be shed upon the earth the sentence of death was pronounced upon him in the usual way and he was thereupon placed in heavy chains. The Brahman then called to mind the snake, who issuing forth immediately from the earth made his appearance before him, and after making him obeisance, said to him that he had not given heed to his warning, and had thus received evil for the good he had done. " But be not uneasy, sir," he added, " I shall know how to repay the

kindness I have received from you, my benefactor. I shall now go and bite the princess when she goes to the garden to gather flowers and to divert herself." The snake then gave him instructions how to act, saying: "When the announcement of the princess being bitten by a snake is publicly made, you must offer to cure her, and then call me to mind." The snake then took leave of the Brahman and lay concealed among the flowers, watching his opportunity. When the princess went into the garden and was amusing herself with her companions and stretched forth her hand to pluck a flower, the snake bit her and she fell down and swooned. This created no little consternation among her companions, who raised her and carried her to the palace crying out: "A snake has bitten the princess." The king immediately summoned his physicians for the purpose of having the poison drawn out, and he further caused a proclamation to be made through his officers that whoever would heal the princess would be rewarded with cities and titles, and would have the princess herself to wife. By command of the king this proclamation was made with the sound of the gong, but there was nobody in the whole city who was able to neutralise the effect of the poison. The king inquired of his nobles whether the physicians had been able to extract the poison, but was informed that all the endeavours of the physicians had been unsuccessful, and that there was only one other person to be consulted, namely the Brahman, who lay in prison under sentence of death.

The king then commanded his officers to consult the Brahman immediately. On being questioned by the nobles the Brahman said that he possessed some knowledge, and would undertake the cure. When these words of the Brahman were conveyed to the king, he at once reiterated his promise that, in the event of a cure, he would give his daughter to the Brahman in marriage and would further grant him cities and titles. The Brahman caused a curtain with seven plaits to be hung and the princess to be brought out for the ceremonies. By command of the king the Brahman was bathed and clothed in white garments, after which he called Phaya Ngu (the snake god) to mind. The snake appeared immediately and drew out the poison from the body of the princess, who instantaneously was her former self again. When the companions of the princess announced to the king the good news of her restoration to health, he commanded preparations for the wedding to be made, and the

marriage of the princess was soon after solemnised, and cities and titles were bestowed on the Brahman and the princess. The Brahman now related to the king everything connected with the strange adventure that had happened to the princess, explaining all the details connected with it, and when the king became acquainted with all the facts of the case, he commanded the goldsmith to be brought before him, in order that he might be confronted with the Brahman. The goldsmith was obliged to admit that the Brahman's statement was perfectly correct. As a punishment for gross ingratitude, and for having acted in opposition to the precepts of Kitasadika, the king commanded the goldsmith to be branded on the face and to be led about with shaven head, in order that he might serve as an example to his subjects, and then be put to death. The king's son-in-law, however, urged that the man had been sufficiently punished by his public exposure, and begged the king to spare his life, for he feared that his death might bring on him consequences of a serious nature in a future birth.

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